

THE ZEPHYRMAN
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The Zephyrman
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And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great. Luke 9:47

Launched at the Bologna Bookfair
To the lost children of the world

It was Easter, 1967, and the midday sun was shining in the middle of the immense blue sky. Everything in the world seemed so quiet and peaceful. Somewhere in the countryside, not far away from a little green island of trees, a young lad opened the door at the side of his house. He gently shut it, then he walked down the path. The young lad lived in this small house in the country with his mother and father, and sister.

Presently, he found himself in his garden and feeling quite content he sat down on the deckchair in front of the kitchen window. The young lad gazed at the world around him. If truth be told he didn't know all that much about the world out there. The world as far as he knew was solely made up of people, houses, farms, green fields and cars.

It was a funny thing, for every day after lunch, when he came outside to play, the young lad always felt something new in the air. Life for him was always new, never dull. Sometimes when he got bored he would gaze across at the trees on the small island, opposite his house, and wonder what lay beyond them.

At times, the young lad felt that the small island stood for something more than just trees and grass; it was strange for it seemed to protect him from something, but from what he could not say. The young lad didn't really know why he felt like this. All he knew was that life existed beyond the little green island in front of his house, and that he was safe here inside his garden.

Even though he knew all the people who lived round about him in the countryside, he sometimes reckoned that they were

foreigners, who came from other countries: for they seemed different from him. Then again sometimes he thought they all belonged together, as if they had always been part of one community. To put the scene in context, even though he was young, the young lad somehow knew that life had a way of never being exactly one thing or the other. Life was a contradiction - that's what it was. He couldn't put that into words, but that is what he felt.

Anyway, he knew everyone in the local area, where they stayed, and what type of work they did - not to have known this the young lad felt would have somehow been wrong. He knew that some people in the local area had the use of a car, and because of this they were different from those who did not have the use of a car. He loved looking at faces. In fact, he knew all the faces of the local people and all the paths they went down every morning, and all the houses they went into every night. He knew what time they left at in the morning, and what time they returned at night; for when he was not playing in his garden, he was always watching the world go by through his living room window.

When he got bored the young lad knew he could go over onto the small green island anytime he wanted to and play there with his football. When he played there on the green island, he thought the world a wonderful place. If truth be told he sometimes thought that everything in the world belonged to him. What a crazy thought that was! But it must be true: for everything had been placed there in front of his eyes just so that he could see it - he couldn't argue with that, now could he. Night and day he thought about this. What did it all mean? What a mystery life was.

To relax, he dreamed about all sorts of things. Sometimes he could see himself leading men into battle. Then at other times he would rescue loved ones. And if he was in a really generous mood, when the people from the other side of the street got into trouble, he would save them before they got killed.

Yes, he was always a great figure in his dreams. He told himself that one day, when he was a man, he would show the world what he was made of. In fact, it was only when a car went

by on the other side of the street, or when someone passed by his house and said something to him, the young lad became aware of the world around him again. When this happened he would look up, see who it was, then go back to musing once more.

However, today everything in the world seemed quiet and peaceful. No cars were passing by. The air was warm, and a gentle breeze silently moved between the leaves of the trees. Looking up at the trees on the small green island the young lad sensed that the birds knew this too. The birds in their usual way were singing their lovely songs. The young lad sensed that this is how they pass their secrets on from generation to generation. Even though he was young, in a strange way, he knew that although everyone in the local area heard them singing, not everyone understood their songs.

Earlier on in the morning his mother had given him some sandwiches to eat, but in half an hour of being outside he had eaten them all. The empty poke now lying there, not all that faraway on the grass beside the deckchair, reminded him of this. Feeling hungry, he stared at the empty poke. He could hardly believe it, 'Did I eat all the sandwiches,' he murmured to himself, 'I must have been hungry.'

Also on the grass half hidden under the radio lay a comic. He would read that later. After thinking about what he was going to do next, he got up and walked back over towards the path. Suddenly he stopped, and for a moment he stared at the marbles inside the colourful biscuit tin, lying under the kitchen window. His mother had given him this old tin to put them in. And as he thought about his empty stomach he picked up some marbles, and as he released them, one by one, he listened to the noise that they made as they fell back inside the colourful biscuit tin. The rhythm for some reason seemed familiar to him and, after a few moments had gone by, some words came into his head and they seemed to make up a song. Feeling happy he started to sing the words as he listened to the falling beat.

However, as if to break his concentration, a large black and green marble, that was slightly bashed on one side, jumped out of

his hand and rolled down the path towards the green gate. Even though it was bashed on one side it quickly rolled down onto the pavement. Thankfully, the marble eventually stopped rolling and fell into the gutter just by the side of the road. He was lucky for if it had been one of the smaller marbles it would have surely dropped down into the black stank by the kerb and been lost forever - and forever is a long time in a young lad's mind. The young lad smiled to himself when he noticed this, then he walked down the path to retrieve it.

Presently, he opened the garden gate and went outside. Just as he picked up the marble the young lad observed a figure coming along the road. The man's clothes were very old; however he noticed his jolly face seemed to fit in with the country surroundings. Then he understood who it was. Everyone in the local area knew this man, for he was such a familiar figure. The people in the local area called him the Zephyrman. He was a friendly old man.

The young lad, as soon as he set eyes on the old man, remembered what his mother had said to him at the dinner table a few weeks ago: 'Yes, my little one, the Zephyrman comes and goes like the wind, but no one knows where he comes from, and no one knows where he goes to. He comes round here every day, but he never stays long.'

His father had added, 'The Zephyrman will always stop and have a kind word with you. He speaks to everyone. He is a friendly old man. I heard when he was younger, he was a wild character, many people have said this about him; they say that even though he is old now you can still see this in his craggy face. Some people in the local area say that he has no family, others maintain that he has had many wives, but no one is sure.'

Yes, indeed many things had been said about the old man, but the strangest thing ever said about him was that it was only children that could really understand him.

When the old man was only a few feet away from the boy, the young lad stood up straight and smiled at him. Wondering where

the old man was off to, the young lad cried out, 'Zephyrman, where are you going today?'

The Zephyrman stopped walking and stared at his cheeky face. Then he glanced over at the long row of small working class houses across the road from where the young lad lived. And after a long look here and there, between the windows and doors of the houses, he sighed to himself. 'Where am I going today?' Then he said in a loud, peculiar tone, 'That's a fine question for a young lad to ask.' The old man, after a hearty laugh, added boldly, 'Well, my young friend, since you have asked, I will tell you. I follow the wind. I go wherever it takes me: for I am the Zephyrman.'

After saying this the old man turned round and looked at the landscape behind him, in the direction from where he came. For a few moments he stared at the only house on top of the hill there. Then he said playfully, 'You know how every morning the sun comes over that hill.'

The young lad replied quickly, 'Yes.'

'Well, as soon as the light falls across the land, I get up and follow the wind.'

The young lad didn't know what he meant, so he just nodded. Then he realised that the old man was right: for that was the hill where the sun came over every morning. He had noticed the house on the hill before, but he had never thought about the sun coming over it.

'Maybe that's where the Zephyrman stays in that old house on top of the hill,' thought the young lad to himself.

For a moment the young lad stared at the house on top of the hill until he caught sight of a horse standing in a field not faraway. The horse was bending down, it seemed to be chewing some grass. Sometimes he thought the house on top of the hill was really faraway from where he stayed, then at other times he thought the house seemed quite near. One day, he promised himself, that he would go there and find out which of the two were true: near or far.

The Zephyrman, seeing him deep in thought, did not say anything to him. He just patted the young lad on the head like his

dad did. Then the old man repeated to him in a craggy voice, 'Yes, my young friend, as soon as the sun comes up in the morning, I get up, and whatever way the wind is blowing I follow it - that's why they call me the Zephyrman.'

This action to a young mind seemed very simple, and yet at the same time wonderful. And as he stood there on the pavement in front of his house, the young lad thought about the sun and how it comes over the hill every morning, and how the wind blows in different directions. To a young mind it seemed a marvellous thing how an old man got up every morning and followed the wind here and there, wherever it blew. He smiled at the old man, for he knew that he had seen more sunrises than he had, 'Life for some reason must be something simple, yet unbelievable,' he told himself.

As he stared at the craggy face of the old man, the young lad thought the Zephyrman strange and funny. The old man seemed to have some sort of power over life, and yet he seemed so simple. At first, the young lad thought that he had a tea cosy on top of his head, for that is what his white woollen hat looked like. He also noticed that his old thick black coat was not black at all, but navy blue, and it was torn here and there. When he looked back up at the Zephyrman's face, for some reason, he thought about all the colours that come over the hill with the sun every morning. 'I suppose that anyone who follows the wind every day must be a colourful character,' he reckoned.

The young lad thought about the wind and how it blew the old man here and there. Yes, life at that moment to the young lad seemed wonderful, and yet so simple. Naturally, with all these thoughts going on inside his head, the young lad asked the old man another question: 'I know what trees the birds sleep in at night, but when the sun goes to bed where do you go to sleep, Zephyrman?'

The old man looked at him, then he cleverly replied, 'When the light fades, my little one, I just put my head down and go to sleep wherever I am,' then he laughed.

All of a sudden, as the young lad listened to the wind, he seemed to understand the old man and why he wandered around on his own, and why he avoided answering questions. The wind seemed to tell the young lad everything about the old man's life, and why he wanted to be on his own. And in a strange way something told him that the people out there who lived way beyond the fields, trees, and houses, were not what they seemed. They were different from the old man; they did not follow the wind. They followed something else.

'Mr Zephyrman are the people out there in the world nice to you?' the young lad asked him politely.

'They are nice to me, but they don't understand me,' chuckled the old man.

This was a difficult thing for a young mind to take in. The young lad who lived in the heart of the country, as usual when difficult things came upon him, stared at the trees on the green island. Thankfully, the familiar setting in some way seemed to help him.

In fact, sometimes when he played outside his house with his football he stared at the fields faraway in the distance and he tried to imagine who lived out there, and what they were like. When he got confused the young lad would make up names for imaginary figures and give them jobs to do. However, invariably it was always the same dream: a cottage on the hill would appear, then he would look in through the window and see a warm coal fire - the same kind as his dad built for him every morning - and then faces would appear inside the cottage. Then a wonderful story would follow.

The young lad, however, had to admit to himself that he did not know anyone beyond the fields, and he sometimes sighed to himself after dreaming, 'Who are they all?' Where do they all come from?'

In a strange way when he came back to the surroundings of the countryside that he knew so well, his confused young mind would try and work things out, 'I wonder what lies out there in that other world, beyond the fields and farms?' he would often mutter to himself.

In a moment of pure theatre, the young lad cried out, 'What is the world like out there, Zephyrman?'

The Zephyrman, glad for a word with someone, lent up against the green railing in front of his house and, as if to affirm something to himself, he nodded. Then he took out a small pipe from his coat pocket and lit it. After lighting his pipe, he blew the match out and said, 'Now, I wonder what makes a little lad like you ask a big question like that,' and as he slowly turned away from the young lad, the old man stared at the fields beyond the little green island opposite the boy's house, 'Yes, out there lies a strange world indeed my little friend. In fact, some people who live out there hardly get to know one another. They live together yet they hardly get to know one another - isn't that strange.'

The man may have been old, but the young lad noticed that when he spoke he became animated. It was as if a young lad's spirit ran through the old man's body, and made him young again. How this could be he did not know. All he knew was that the old man's face beamed with delight to the echo of his own words, and when this happened his movements appeared nimble, and he became like a young boy again.

The young lad thought him funny and he laughed at the old man. Then he asked him, 'Please tell me, Mr Zephyrman, where are you going to today?'

A big grin appeared on the old man's face and, as he patted the young lad on the head again, he repeated, 'As soon as I feel the wind on my face, my feet seem to follow invisible footsteps. I know not where I go. I arrive at a place, then I depart. I look here, I look there. I guess that's why they call me the Zephyrman.'

After the old man had finished speaking he smiled at the young lad, then he fumbled for something in his old coat pocket. A minute or two later the old man took out a strange round object from a deep pocket inside his coat.

The strange object the young lad noticed was made of glass and about the size of the man's palm. To the young lad it looked

like a big watch; however inside the glass he could see the letter N. The letter had been painted in red, and an arrow pointed towards it. In the centre of the glass there was a little circle painted in the same colour as the letter, and inside this circle a bubble floated around inside the glass. A line split the face in two, and there were numbers all around it.

The old man and the young lad both stared at the strange object for a time, then the Zephyrman gently moved it in his hand until the water bubble went into the middle of the red circle. It wobbled about for a time, then it settled. The old man then turned the line to face the red letter N. As he did this his gaze fixed on the garden gate in front of the boy's house. It was strange, for the garden gate seemed to connect with the object in some way.

After a time the young lad, in a loud voice, read the numbers around the arrow: '3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 33.'

He knew that it was not a watch, for by this time he had learned to tell the time. The young lad was just about to ask the old man what it was when a black cat came across the road, and for some reason he suddenly became aware of the cat's shadow as it trailed along behind the cat on the grey concrete. He had never really noticed shadows before. The shadow was smaller than the cat. The young lad observed how the black cat looked up at the Zephyrman as if it knew him, before it lazily strolled up the garden path towards the young lad's house. The cat in fact gave the impression that it was following some prearranged plan, just like the Zephyrman.

'Maybe it listens to the wind and follows invisible footsteps just like the old man,' chuckled the young lad.

The Zephyrman seemed to read the young lad's thoughts. In a twinkling of an eye he said to him, 'Yes, the sun rises early in the morning, and as it moves across the sky it pushes everything away from it. And as the day goes by the shadows get longer and longer, and the light starts to fade. Then in a moment it is dark. You see time is split into two halves: the here and now, which includes past, present and future, and then there is the other side of time.'

The Zephyrman hesitated at this point and looked about him. Then he added in a secret whisper, 'However, I must tell you my young friend, shadows disappear at night only to appear on the other side of time, where they come alive again.' As if to wonder about what he had just said, the old man paused, then he said cautiously, 'But don't be afraid, my young friend, the sun always brings them back to us the next day, and once more they follow us everywhere we go.'

The young lad wondered what lay on the other side of time, for it seemed a strange - yet wonderful place. Even though he did not have a watch yet, the young lad could tell the time. He reckoned that it was around midday, for he was hungry. Looking back at the strange object in the old man's hand he asked him, 'What is it?'

The Zephyrman sighed, then moved the object till the line went right through the letter N. Then slowly he said, 'This, my young friend, is a compass: an instrument for finding the direction you want to go in.'

For the first time in life the young lad wondered about an object and its power to direct people. He asked quietly as he touched it, 'Where did you get it from?'

The Zephyrman sighed, 'Oh, this one was made a long time ago, it is very old indeed. I believe it once belonged to a tank driver in the Second World War. It came into my possession by pure chance.' Then after a long look at the old compass, he added, 'You must understand, my little one, even though I follow the wind, I sometimes need a little bit of help,' and after a wry smile, he whispered to the young lad, 'just in case I forget the direction I should be going in.'

With keen eyes the young lad fixed his stare on the big round object on the palm of the old man's hand. Thinking about what had just been said, he exclaimed, 'So this object here tells you where you should be going.'

The Zephyrman chuckled again and, as he moved the compass in his hand, he told the young lad, 'Yes, in fact, I have even heard it said that some people go through life and do not

know which direction they should be going in. Some of them follow a material object, others a cause. They cannot see the invisible footprints, scattered here and there, along the path of life, like I can. The earth you see has four directions: north, south, east, and west. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west. Everyone living on the planet in one way, or another, must go in one direction, either towards the north, towards the south, towards the east, or towards the west.'

When the young lad heard him say this he looked in the direction where the sun came over the hill every morning, and for the first time in his life he knew that to be the east.

At this point the Zephyrman did not seem all that interested in him. In fact, he mumbled to himself a nursery rhyme: *'The man on the moon came down too soon, and asked his way to Norwich. He went by the south, and burnt his mouth with supping cold plum porridge.'* (Gammer Gurton's Garland, 1784)

Laughing he added, 'When I was your age, I used to sing that.'

After a moment or two the Zephyrman passed the compass to the young lad, and as the boy took it from the old man he watched the bubble float around inside the dark object. Then after a moment or two he transferred it over to his right hand and, as if by magic as it lay it there flat on the palm of his hand, the bubble once more settled in the middle of the face of the compass.

The Zephyrman bent down beside the young lad and, as he looked up at his young face, he smiled and whispered to him, 'If you take this you will be able to go anywhere in the world, and you will never get lost.'

Once again the young lad wondered what lay beyond the fields way out there in the surrounding countryside. He stared for a moment into space, for the clouds were moving along the top of the horizon line. 'There may be explosions going on way out there in the world?' he thought to himself.

Along the horizon line there were strange objects standing here and there; they looked like iron corsets for thin old ladies. Seeing the young lad deep in thought the Zephyrman, to get his

attention, told him what they were, 'Electricity pylons.' Then he pointed at the compass in his hand. 'The N stands for north, and opposite it, down here at number 18, is the south; over here, at number 9, is the east, and across here at number 27, is the west.'

The young lad smiled at him, then repeated what the old man had just said. However, halfway through it he stopped and asked him, 'Does everyone have a compass in life?'

Winking at the boy the old man said, 'In one way or another,' and as the old man touched the boy's hand the letter N inside the face of the compass moved. To explain what had just happened, the old man told him, 'See how the figures move, but the line always stays the same. When the bubble goes back into the centre, turn the line to the direction you want to go in. Now you will be able to see how the land lies.'

'Can I keep it for one day!' cried the young lad. 'I will go from here and see what's out there in the big wide world?'

As if knowing what would happen to him, the Zephyrman smiled. Then, in a tone just like the boy's mother, he said to him, 'And where will you go my little one, for you know no-one out there in the big wide world?'

Feeling the gentle wind on the side of his face the young lad reflected for a moment; for the wind seemed to draw him somewhere, then release him. He looked towards the country fields that he knew so well.

'I wonder what direction the wind is coming from and where it is going to,' muttered the old man.

When the young lad looked back up at the old face of the Zephyrman again, he smiled and declared, 'The wind is coming from the west.'

The old man nodded to tell him that he was right, then for some reason he looked about him as if looking for a sign to confirm this. He seemed to sense something in the wind. All of a sudden the old man said, 'Yes.' Then he added thoughtfully, 'Do you know that all the secrets of the world are carried in the wind, not everyone understands them; no-one knows where they come from, or where they go to.'

Feeling excited, the young lad cried, 'I want to be like you, Zephyrman. I will follow the wind, and one day I will find out where it comes from, and where it goes to.'

'The old man laughed when he heard him say this, and after he had looked over in the direction of the little houses, opposite the green island, he said in a quiet voice, 'A man who follows the wind never stays in any place for long: he goes here; he goes there; he learns to be at peace with the world.'

As the Zephyrman gazed at the small boy he wondered to himself if one day the young lad, like him, would give up everything and follow the wind. Just in case he would go wandering off, as he lit his pipe again, the old man tried to help the young lad understand the ways of the world. First of all he told him all about the trees: oaks, elms and pines, on the little green island in front of his house. Then he told him all about the birds that fly in and out of them: the sparrows, magpies, robins, blackbirds and wagtails. However, after explaining to him the nature of the land, he said to him solemnly, 'If you want to become a Zephyrman, like me, you will have to learn many things. You will have to learn for instance how to travel on your own. You will have to learn the ways of the land, and the ways of the people who live on the land. You will have to learn to belong to no place - to no-one.'

'Must I always be on my own?' asked the little lad.

'Yes, there is no other way. You must always be your own best friend.'

The young lad reflected upon what he had just heard, for he now saw the world in a new way; it was as if the words from the old man's mouth had opened a new window in his young mind.

Playing his part in the strange afternoon drama the old man stared at the world around him as if knowing the tricks the wind can play upon the mind. He knew the young lad had a mother and father and an older sister, for he had passed his house many times. After staring at the fields faraway in the distance, he asked after them kindly, 'How is everyone in your house?'

Hardly giving it a thought the young lad replied, 'Fine.'

After a few moments had passed, the young lad and the old man watched a blackbird land on the green fence beside them. The bird quickly looked over at the boy's house, then it flew up into the Silver Birch tree inside his garden, not far from the newly painted green gate. For a few seconds the Zephyrman's eyes followed the blackbird, then he turned and looked at the boy again.

In that strange voice of his, the old man continued, 'From the beginning of time people have wandered from village to village, but I remember a time when only the birds lived here.' And as he leaned back on the green railing in front of the boy's house, the Zephyrman, for a second or two, seemed to dwell upon his thoughts. Then as if to arrest them in space and time, he lamented, 'I'm afraid, my young friend, everything in this life changes, nothing stays the same.' Then he sighed after this, and added, 'Change comes in the wind, and stops you in your tracks.'

The young lad did not understand what he meant. He felt that when he ran along the green island he could cut through the air. In a self-assured voice he told the old man, 'I can run as fast as the wind.'

A smile crossed the face of the Zephyrman, but he did not say anything to the little boy; instead he looked up again at the blackbird high up in the silver birch tree. Not long after this the blackbird flew across the road to another tree, in the middle of the green island. After it had disappeared, the Zephyrman smiled and said, 'Every spring the birds pair off on the branches of the trees in the middle of the green island. Then they mate. This wonderful season always comes around after bleak mid winter.'

The young lad shook his head in wonder, and said quietly, 'They do.'

'You must have seen them building their nests high up in the sky, faraway from unwanted prey. I tell you the wind can blow the roof clean off a house, but their little homes are always safe and sound. It's marvellous to see.'

In the quiet of the afternoon, the young lad observed a magpie float down through the air and, as it landed on the grass in

front of where he stayed, he watched it take some bread from the lawn. In an excited voice he cried, 'That bird knows my father, for he feeds it every day.'

The old man seemed to understand, and he looked at the bird, then up at its nest. Then he said to the young lad, 'The bird knows you too. He sees more than you think, my little one, for he listens to the wind - just like the Zephyrman.'

Turning round the young lad looked at the house where he stayed, and for the first time he wondered about the men who must have built it. After staring at his house, he proudly told the old man, 'This is my house.'

The Zephyrman looked at the small white building. Then he sighed and said, 'Yes, and when you are older, my little one, you too will leave and go and live somewhere else. You too will collect food for young ones. You will be a great man.'

The young lad had not thought about this. He quickly asked the old man, 'Where will I go, Zephyrman?'

Laughing the Zephyrman said, 'You will be filled with crazy ideas; for powers beyond your imagination will move you in one direction, then another. Then one day, if you are lucky, the dream of life will come upon you, and you will follow the wind.' After saying this he laughed, then he gave the young lad some strange advice: 'But always remember this, my little one: stay on this side of time.'

The young lad thought him a little crazy for saying this, and he wondered what he meant by it. Then for some reason he thought about the sun and how it cast shadows here and there over the earth. Then his gaze once again fell upon the horizon line, and he wondered what in the world lay out there beyond the houses and fields. When he thought about things out there in the big wide world it seemed to his young mind a strange place, and he could not understand it.

Seeing the excitement on his young face, the Zephyrman said to him in a sublime voice, 'Others will feel this, and they too will follow a dream. Some people will crave beauty and search for it. Some people will crave adventure and go after it. Some people will

crave treasure and hunt for it. For everyone who lives on this side of time follows a dream.'

The image of people wandering through the world following a dream made the young lad happy. Of course he had heard about treasure, and he knew that once you had found it you could keep it forever and, as has been already said before, forever is a long time in a young lad's mind.

After thinking about all the wonderful things that he would take from the big wide world, he asked the old man a practical question, 'How will I bring the treasure back with me?'

A strange thing happened at that moment for when the old man turned round and gazed at the young lad's house he noticed his mother at the kitchen window, and he remained silent as he stared at her. Then like a gentleman he said, 'Real treasure is never heavy, my boy.'

'It's not,' sighed the little lad, 'Good.'

'No, it is always light,' and as he turned back to look at his young friend, the old man made a funny face at him. The young lad laughed and, after he had made a funny face back at the old man, he pushed the biscuit tin of marbles through the green fence so that he would not lose them. Then he stood up straight again and asked the old man another question, 'Who will I meet, when I go there, in the big wide world?'

The Zephyrman searched the young lad's face as if to determine events in time and space in the future. Then, he listened to the wind, as if gathering secret information about the lad, 'Oh, you will meet people from all walks of life,' and after thinking about what he had just said, the old man muttered to himself: 'I wonder what you are going to be in life my boy, a man of the arts, a man of business?'

'The young lad did not know, and he replied accordingly, 'I am not sure what I want to be.' Then he suddenly got an idea, 'My father works in a shop, though.'

When he heard this, the Zephyrman came to life and he told the young lad, 'A man who serves others in this life is indeed a great man, for he communicates to others all he knows. He who

serves others helps society in more ways than one. When a good man serves someone, who knows not what he wants, first he listens to him, then he wonders about the words he hears. When a good man serves someone, who does not know what he wants, he puts forward ideas. Then he acts on the reaction. A good man who serves a man will never rush a man who is unsure; if someone does not know what they want, then they do not know what they want, and that in itself is a wonder. A mind still to be made up should not be rushed, for a decision still to be taken is something still to happen. A good man who serves another knows that he is there to serve not to make up minds. When someone acquires something he does not have, he is grateful to God, and a good man who serves him will see this in his face, and he too will thank God.'

The young lad loved the way the old man spoke, he seemed to have power over life. And in his imagination at that moment the young lad saw people coming together in a shop and meeting each other for the first time. Some of them were buying, others were helping. The young lad saw himself serving someone, then he saw himself buying something - it was such great fun. In fact, at that moment he imagined all over the world people were buying things: 'What a wonderful world it is,' he thought to himself.

The old man seeing the young lad reflect upon his thoughts left him alone, for he did not want to interrupt him when he was daydreaming.

Thinking about what his mother had once said to him, the young lad suddenly cried out, 'I like cooking! Maybe I'll be a cook one day.'

Again the old man turned round and looked at the kitchen window of the boy's house. Then he agreed with his young friend, 'Yes, people need good food to nourish them, and a good cook will make many people happy. A good cook can feed everyone with what he has in his kitchen, and moreover a good cook can make food look wonderful.' After a profound pause the old man added, 'You see, my young friend, everyone who goes out into the world must take part in it.'

After he had said this the young lad thought the old man looked hungry, so he asked him, 'Do you want something to eat, for my mother is a great cook? She will make you something right away.'

This made the old man laugh, 'No, I am not hungry, but it is kind of you to think about me, all the same.'

As he stood there the young lad stared at the old man's threadbare coat, and he wondered who made his meals for him: 'Who cooks for you, Zephyrman?' he asked him boldly.

The Zephyrman did not say and, when no answer came back from the old man's lips, the young lad fell into a long lazy daydream again. His young eyes stared faraway beyond the fields, houses, and trees. Then he sat down with his back against the green fence and, when the sun slipped behind a silver balloon like cloud, for something to do the young lad scratched the pavement in front of him with a sharp stone and made a funny face on the ground.

Seeing him do this the Zephyrman cried, 'Ah, maybe you are going to be an artist. You may want to capture life.' Then, in a serious tone he told him, 'The artist's job is to reflect beauty back to the human eye in colours and lines. People, you see, love to dream, and the artist knows this, and he paints pictures, so that they can escape from the evil world around them.'

Just then the wind changed direction and came from the south west. Wondering if this was some kind of prophetic sign the young lad gazed up at the Zephyrman. The old man's face at that moment looked serious, and for a few seconds he stared at the changing sky above him, as if looking for a sign. In an anxious strange voice, he muttered to himself, 'No one knows what comes in the wind.'

The young lad wondered if anything was wrong, for up to this point he had only known pleasure in life and did not know anything other than that. However, last night when he was in bed he remembered that he had heard some people going along the lane at the back of his house; they were arguing with each other. In the morning he had asked his father about them, and his father had told him that they had no doubt been to the local pub and were drunk. The change from being sober to being drunk he felt was similar to the change now happening in the sky: for dark clouds were beginning to gather. The young lad told the Zephyrman his story about the men going up the lane last night, then he asked him, 'Is this what he meant by an evil world?'

The Zephyrman laughed and after looking behind him to see if anyone was coming along the street, he said to the young lad, 'Yes,

man is a vain creature, full of evil, full of lust,' and then for some reason he laughed again.

Even though the old man laughed, it sounded awfully bad and once more the young lad wondered about the big wide world out there, and if truth be told it did put him off from wanting to go on his adventure. The fantastic journey beyond the houses and fields now seemed to be full of danger - evil things seemed to be lurking everywhere out there. But the young lad was brave, and in a bold tone he told the Zephyrman, 'One day, I will wander beyond the shops and houses and I will find new friends, and all in the world will be well.'

Out of the blue sky a song thrush flew up into the silver birch tree, in the boy's garden and landed on a long thin branch. For a time the Zephyrman watched the bird, then in a hushed tone he told the young lad, 'The bird is looking for insects.'

The young lad understood how the song thrush got there, but he could hardly understand how it could see the tiny insects crawling about under the grass. In a serious tone he asked the old man, 'How can birds see insects, when I can't see them?'

'Birds can see for miles; they have terrific vision,' said the old man softly. 'Although having said that they sometimes just pick up insects off the branches where they sit.'

The young lad looked towards the grass in front of his house, then back up towards the silver birch tree where the song thrush sat. Just then a beautiful red admiral butterfly lazily flew into the garden, and as he watched it the old man told the young lad, 'Insects can fly through the air without anyone seeing them. The wind directs them here and there. In fact, the wind carries all God's creatures through the air. You must understand my young friend the air is full of magic; sometimes the creatures of the wind rest for a while, sometimes they keep going, sometimes they find a friend and hide away, sometimes they lose themselves, sometimes they disappear, and sometimes their journey ends before it begins. But in one way or another, as they move along, they all play their part in life.' After saying this the old man sighed, 'Ah, the world in motion is a wonderful thing indeed.'

The young lad stared at the old man's eyes, for his eyes were full of wonder. Then he looked up at the silver birch tree in his garden, and from that moment he seemed to see things in a different light. It was as if another window in his young mind had been blown open, and a brand new world had come crashing through.

The Zephyrman watched his young eyes stare at him and, with a kind smile on his face, the old man added, 'Nature is a wonderful thing, my little one.' Then without warning his tone changed, 'But you must never go against it.'

Suddenly a man came out of the house opposite where the young lad stayed. The thin man had a paper folded under his arm. He walked along the path, then turned left towards the main road. The young lad watched him. In a curious voice he asked the Zephyrman 'Where does that man go to every day?'

The Zephyrman watched the thin man walk away, then just when he reached the top of the hill at the end of the green island, he answered the young lad, 'That man works in the city for the good of the land.'

The young lad had heard about the city, for many of the locals he knew worked there. In an excited voice, he said to the old man, 'They say there are statues in the city as tall as men, and buildings made of glass.'

'Great big buildings, and great big statutes!' cried the Zephyrman, and he stretched his right hand up above his head, as if to meet the sky, 'You will not believe your eyes when you see the city.'

However, the young lad also knew that some of the people in the local area did not work, and he asked the Zephyrman about this. 'Not everyone works, though?'

In a sympathetic voice, the Zephyrman answered him, 'Yes, this is true.' Then, after nodding and muttering to himself, something about someone he knew who did not work, the old man said to the young lad, 'Some are held against their will, others see no need for it.'

The young lad liked the way the old man spoke; his words seemed so poetic even when life was difficult to understand. As he looked up at the Zephyrman, the young lad for some reason thought about the man who stands opposite the pub, not far from the bus stop. He had first noticed this man when his mum took him there to the shops. Thinking about the man's cheery face, he asked the Zephyrman, 'Men who do not work are not bad men, are they?'

'Men are good and bad in all walks of life,' answered the Zephyrman, 'The wind blows them here and there, but it does not evaluate them.'

The Zephyrman looked again at the trees in the middle of the green island. Then he yawned, 'I'm tired,' he said, 'I think I'll go over there and sit down for a moment under the old Elm tree.'

So after a long sigh, the old man walked over across the small road over onto the green island, just like the boy did when he wanted to play football on the grass. The young lad, as he followed him onto the green island, watched him closely. After the Zephyrman had sat down, and leaned up against the old Elm tree - that he used as a goal post - he thought that even though the old man looked tired he seemed happy. The young lad, in complete opposition to this, felt wonderful and he ran around the green island chasing an imaginary football.

The Zephyrman watched him for a time kick the imaginary football about here and there. However, when he turned to his left, the old man noticed an ash tree next to the elm tree, where he sat, and he laughed because of its association with thunderstorms. Then he shouted to the young lad in a hearty voice, 'I'm glad I didn't sit down over there - that may have been bad luck.'

After punching the air the young lad turned round and shouted to the Zephyrman: 'GOAL! WHAT A GOAL!'

Then feeling good he went and sat down beside the old man under the elm tree. 'This goal means we will be the champions, forever and ever,' and the young lad made the sound of a football crowd.

The Zephyrman had never seen a TV, or heard a TV commentator's voice before, so he did not understand the terminology he had just heard. He just put it down to the wind and the crazy thoughts that fly through the air, and end up between the ears of young boys of that age who run around trees chasing an imaginary object.

Just then a strange woman who lived on the opposite side of the green island at that moment came out of her house. She seemed different from all the other neighbours. The young lad had heard other people mutter things about her. Someone had called her Bammy Suzy. She quickly looked over at the young lad and at the old man on the green island. The way she looked at them worried the old man, for he could see that she had been ostracised from society, by the local people, and isolation had made her strange.

'Why do people look the way they do?' asked the young lad quite innocently.

The Zephyrman chuckled when he heard the young lad say this, and as the strange woman walked by on the other side of the road in the direction of the shops, she passed a local man and his Dalmatian dog. The dog, the young lad thought, bear an uncanny resemblance to the man who was pulling it along. Hearing no reply to his question, he added, 'Zephyrman, don't you think some people look strange?'

Thinking up something to say the old man uttered, 'Yes,' then he quickly added, 'some people have strange mouths, some people have strange hands, some people have strange legs, some people have strange eyes, some people speak strange words.' And after lifting his old eyebrows up, he said tenderly, 'However, God has created everything in this beautiful world, and sometimes we can only understand what it is all about by listening to the wind.'

The young lad thought about the word God. Then he thought about his family, and then about his friends. It all seemed so strange and wonderful. 'How are secret thoughts passed between people?' he marvelled to himself.

The whole of life just then seemed like a dream to him. In fact, even the funny old face of the Zephyrman, who sat beside him, seemed young again. Looking down at his crumpled up old coat the young lad thought the Zephyrman ever so funny lying up against the old elm tree. Trying to resemble the pose of the old man, who was sitting next to him, he smiled at him. Then he quietly asked, ‘Zephyrman, do you have many friends?’

With a wry smile on his face the old man told him, ‘All people who stop and speak to me are my friends.’ Then as if knowing impressions on young minds are never lost, he added, ‘A long time ago they used to follow me here and there, and listen to my every word, but now they have all faded away, just like the wind.’ However, after listening to the gentle breeze, as he sat there under the old Elm tree on the small island, the Zephyrman admitted to himself, ‘Although sometimes, you know, I still hear their voices in the wind; some of them try to help me, while others are still against me. I’m afraid that’s life, my young friend.’

The young lad listened carefully to the sound of the breeze, but he could not hear any voices; he seemed to understand what the old man meant though. For something to do he looked between the trees on the little green island till his eye settled on a familiar tree that he had once climbed. Then out of the blue he asked the old man another question, ‘Zephyrman, why do birds sing to each other the way they do?’

After smiling the Zephyrman looked up at the silver birch tree in the boy’s garden, and as he stared at it he spotted a chaffinch, then a robin on another branch not faraway. With shining eyes the old man watched the birds dance together on the branches of the tree. After a time, he slowly pointed at them as if the least wee thing out of place would upset them, and make them fly away. He said in a hushed tone, ‘The birds are telling each other something about this life, for they are happy to be here on this side of time. You see they want to fill the air with music so that their voices will echo forever throughout the world. They are saying to the world, “We are here to sing for you.” When they fly through the air they listen to the wind and hear the thoughts of

the earth. After this they make up their songs about what they have heard, and then the birds sing them to each other.'

For some unknown reason it seemed wonderful and yet unbelievable, and the young lad laughed out loud. Then he thought about last summer when he was on holiday with his parents. He remembered how his father every day used to take him down to the beach, and when they were there how he would tell him all about the birds. He remembered how during the day the birds would hang around on the beach, and how they would fly out to sea in search of food from the fishing boats. The young lad had wondered where they went to at night. Just then, as he sat under the elm tree, he recollected what his dad had told him: 'At night when the sun has fallen from the sky, and all the stars are out, the seabirds just settle here and there, wherever they can, on cliffs and rocks...'

Now that he thought about it, his father had spoken to him about the birds in a manner not unlike the old Zephyrman. In a happy carefree voice he told the Zephyrman about his holiday and about the birds he had seen along the seashore. Then after a moment or two, he added in a familiar crowing tone, 'Last summer, you know, I was throwing stones across the sea, and they would skim along the surface, six, seven, sometimes eight times.'

'It's a wonderful thing to be able to do that,' chuckled the old man.

The young lad wondered if the Zephyrman really did know everything, so in a serious tone he asked him, 'What lies at the bottom of the sea, Zephyrman?'

With a little nod of the head, and a folding of the hands, the old man answered him in a mysterious tone, 'Another world, my little one, another world.'

Something told the young lad that the Zephyrman had never been down there and, as he wondered about this, he giggled to himself and said, 'He must have heard it in the wind.'

Wondering what to do next the Zephyrman started to recite the days of the week. And as he did so the young lad noticed that he looked at him in the same manner as he did when he listened to the breeze. After a few moments, the old man hummed a tune to himself. Then he started to sing the words:

Sunday, Monday, all days are rhymes, made up of movements through space and time. And when the weekend comes, you'll be just fine, because Sunday is Monday, all days are rhymes. And when you laugh, don't be afraid for the moon and stars are the love in your heart. Sunday to Monday, Tuesday is fine, Wednesday is moody, Thursday is mine. And when the weekend comes you'll be just fine, because Sunday is Monday, all days are rhymes.

The young lad liked the song, and when the Zephyrman looked up through the trees above him the young lad noticed that the beautiful blue sky seemed to hold all the answers for him. Why all the answers to this life were up there in the sky above him he could not say - but there they were. The shapes of the clouds were like dreams to the old man, floating around inside a never-ending universe. Even though the sky up there looked so vast and wonderful his young mind searched the spaces between the clouds,

and after a time the young lad really did seem to understand how all the answers to everything down here on earth were up there floating around in a never-ending universe.

The young lad told himself, 'If I'm to be a great man, I cannot worry about anything down here. When things get tough in life I will look up to the sky; for now I know where the answers are to be found.'

Sometimes the colours in the sky would change, but when they stayed the same the young lad could see that the sky stretched forever, way beyond his imagination, far into another world. As he stared at the beautiful sky, he smiled to himself and muttered, 'Time travel is an easy thing, all you do is let yourself go.'

At that moment, the Zephyrman looked from the sky, and into the young eyes of the boy beside him, 'I know every sign that takes place up there between the sunshine and the rain,' he told his young friend, 'Yes, it's going to be not too bad a day, today. However, there will probably be a downpour later on in the afternoon, round about four o'clock, then it should clear up.' After this he sighed and said to himself, 'Ah, thank goodness summer is not far away, now.'

As if to get ready for the great event the young lad stood up, and as he stretched himself he remembered the long lazy summer days of last year: the bright early mornings, the swing on the hill, the tree he climbed, the girl he met in the field called Dorothy, and his mum coming into his bedroom to kiss him good night.

'Yes, it's going to be another warm day tomorrow,' he heard the old man say.

Out of curiosity the young lad asked the old Zephyrman, 'How can you tell today what the weather will be like tomorrow?'

From where he sat the Zephyrman theatrically looked up at the trees on the little island again, and through a space in the branches he stared far out into space. Then in a voice full of wonder he proclaimed, 'The weather comes and goes, it never stays the same, but all the secrets of this world are passed on in the wind.'

The young lad, as he sat back down again beside the Zephyrman, asked him, 'Can everyone read the signs?'

Shaking his head the old man replied, 'No, not everyone can read the signs.'

Just then a cherry coloured car stopped opposite the young lad's house and the driver pumped his horn. The young lad looked over at him. Then he whispered into the ear of the Zephyrman, 'That's Mr Hornblower,' and he laughed.

It may only have been a made up name, but the old man thought it very suitable, for it seemed to suit the impetuous bald young man who sat at the wheel of the car.

Presently, Mr Hornblower's wife came out of her house, directly opposite where the young lad lived, and got into the car. She was a blonde haired dolly bird. When she slammed the door of the cherry coloured car it produced such a terrific noise that it made all the birds on the green island fly out of their trees. For a moment the whole area seemed to be shaken by this noise, as it travelled through the air. Several dogs down at the bottom of the green island started barking, then someone somewhere shouted their names, telling them to keep the noise down. Not long after this a few people came out of their houses to see what was going on.

The young lad noticed that Mr Hornblower, and his chain smoking wife, did not seem to notice anything around them as they drove off.

After the car went round the little green island twice, the young lad stared at the silver birch tree in his garden. Then he told the Zephyrman proudly, 'See that tree over there, it was planted when I was born.'

'Good heavens!' cried the Zephyrman, and as the old man followed it all the way up to the sky, he quickly added, 'Look how big it is now; it is nearly as big as the house you stay in.'

Yes, everything in the garden at that moment seemed wonderful and serene. The sun was shining and all the flowers under the windows, and along the hedge, had opened up and had come to life. In fact, it seemed to the young lad that all the flowers

at that moment had come up from the dull earth just to greet the sun. In a strange way the colours all over the garden now seemed to signal better times ahead for everyone living around the little green island.

As if to respond to the change in the weather, the old man stared at the boy's garden and muttered, 'I like the way the roses crawl along the wood in front of the window. It makes the garden bony.'

'My dad built that there in front of the window,' said the young lad proudly.

And for a time the young lad, and the old man, stared at the flowers under the window. Then out of the blue, a blackbird flew onto the grass in front of the young lad's house and caught their attention. The Zephyrman in a quiet voice told the young lad, 'The bird is looking for worms and insects among the daisies and four leaf clovers on the grass. Its nest is not far from here, and it has four young mouths to feed.'

The simplicity of looking for food from mother earth to feed a family seemed to touch the young lad, and as he stared at the little bird on the grass it thrilled him way beyond his understanding. Presently, he stood up, although this time he did it in a way as if to salute the thing that lay behind the instinct of survival. The young lad nodded to himself in agreement. Then as he looked over at the silver birch tree in the garden, that had been planted in his honour, he told the Zephyrman? 'When I grow up, I will go out and collect food for young ones.'

There were no flowers on the green island, for the local lads were always playing five a side football there, and all the seeds that had been secretly planted by the birds, and by the wind, were now lost; in some parts there was no grass at all. However, in a strange way the hard soil looked beautiful too as the sun stretched forth its golden hand and kissed everything in its sight.

Feeling refreshed the Zephyrman too stood up and stretched himself. Then for fun he swayed as if something in the wind was trying to blow him off balance. The young lad thought the old

man funny and, as he laughed, his young voice cried, 'You look like a paper man on a windy day, Zephyrman!'

The old man keeping up the fun, then acted as if a storm was blowing, and he swayed back and forth and made strange noises. After the young lad had stopped laughing, the old man dusted some pieces of grass of his old threadbare coat. And as he stood there, he looked around him at the houses on both sides of the little green island, 'You know, I remember a time when no one lived here,' he lamented. 'Yes, I remember when the wind used to come straight down here before heading into the city.' Then he laughed and added, 'Now it has to go round the houses on both sides of the little green island.'

The houses where the young lad stayed were made of bricks and mortar. However, on the other side of the road the houses were light, modern, and prefabricated. The Zephyrman, as he looked at the modern houses, sighed and said, 'Ah, change comes in the wind.'

The young lad did not dwell on the old man's thoughts, for he was restless, and anyway it would soon be midday and his mother would be calling him in for something to eat. When the young lad was hungry he quite often detached himself from the world around him. He could do this just by thinking. It was strange, yet wonderful. When he drifted away he seemed to connect with an imaginary world that was both old and new, far out there somewhere in the distant universe. He sometimes saw himself in the new world, then in the old one, and for some odd reason some of the things that happened in his daydreams were in both worlds. Sometimes his daydreaming thoughts would be quite unreal: like when Mr Hornblower knocked everyone down and killed them. How it all worked, he could not say.

The other thing he liked doing was having tea with his mum and dad and sister; he would watch people pass by his window. He could tell if they were going to the local shops, or when they were going into town. He could also tell when they were looking forward to their journey, or when they were apprehensive about something. Sometimes, he noticed that when people came back

from the city they seemed to be sad; it was as if what they had dreamed about had not taken place. This was hard for him to understand, for all his dreams he knew would come true. And as he pondered this, and many other things, the young lad picked up a stick from the grass on the little green island, and he started to scratch something on the earth, just by the tree.

The Zephyrman watched him and wondering what he was thinking about, he asked him, 'Have you been to the big city yet, my young friend?'

Hearing the fantastic words 'the big city' the young lad looked up and answered him right away, 'No, not yet.'

The old man in the threadbare coat laughed, then he exclaimed, 'Well, I will draw a picture of the city, and let you see what it looks like,' and as he smiled at the boy, he added in a cheery voice, 'I used to be a bit of an artist, you know.'

As has been stated television was now in fashion all over the country, and the young lad's folks had decided to rent one. However, looking at the black and white screen, for the young lad, was not as exciting as going to the big city, 'One day I'm going to go into town on my own,' he told the old man.

Presently, the old man fumbled inside his old coat pocket and brought out a pencil and, after the first few lines had been drawn onto a piece of paper, he sighed, 'Ah, I used to love drawing, you know. I used to draw everything: boats, planes, houses, men's faces, prams, guitars, butter dishes. I remember it well. The world my young friend you must understand is a much better place when it becomes an idea and not an object.'

This puzzled the young lad and he marvelled: 'Maybe life is not something to be understood, after all.'

When the old man had finished his sketch the young lad stared at it and he wondered if he had been there before, for the place the Zephyrman had drawn looked very familiar indeed. But how could it be, for he knew that he had never been further than the shops down the road from where his uncle and aunt stayed?

After the Zephyrman had put away his drawing inside his old coat pocket, the old man looked up at the sky again, then he put

his hand against the old Elm tree, on the little green island, and gently tapped it three times. The boy noticed that when he did this he seemed to connect with mother earth, and was at peace with the world again. And when a bird flew by, the Zephyrman watched it till it safely hid itself in the roof of a Scot's pine tree half way down the little green island.

The man whom the local people call the Zephyrman thought for a moment, then inspired by what he saw, he told the young lad, 'Do you know that in the late afternoon all the birds from around here meet at the far end of the green island, and there they sit on trees and chat to each other. Then when the sign is given they all fly towards the city, and there they take part in a great dance high above the river for the glory of God.'

The young lad for some reason thought it all a great joke: birds on trees, chatting to each other, going to the city to dance. It was as if the old man was playing a game with him, 'What time do they leave?' he asked him keeping up the fun?

In a strange way the Zephyrman looked at him, then he said slowly in that wonderful strange voice of his, 'Every evening just before the light fades you will see them gather at the far end of the little island, then after the sign is given they all head for the city.'

After smiling at the old man, the young lad thought about the birds and how they would perform for the people when they reached the city. He quickly asked the old man another question, 'What do people do, when all the birds are dancing high in the sky? 'Do they start to dance on the streets below?'

Staring at the sky above, the Zephyrman said in a sad voice, 'No, I'm afraid not, my little one, very few people notice them at all.'

'What!' cried the young lad. 'Thousands of birds dance high in the sky for the glory of God, and hardly anyone notices them.'

Sadly, the old man nodded, then he muttered thoughtfully, 'People who inhabit the city are strange. They get lonely. They look down all the time, never up.'

It was such a weird image: thousands of lonely people wandering about a city when above them birds were dancing high

in the sky. The young lad could not understand it, and for a moment he stared at the sky above him and thought about this.

The Zephyrman thought about it too and, as he looked around him, he declared, 'It happens here in the country too, but I remember a time when there were no houses here only bushes and trees, birds and bees,' and after a cough, he sneezed, then he went on, 'Now people hardly go out. They stay in and watch TV, and when they do venture out they never look at the countryside. They go around as if in a dream. They pull up in their cars, make a noise, then disappear.'

As if arranged by the hand of fate just at that moment, Mr Hornblower turned up again in his brand new cherry coloured car, and dropped his wife off. In her usual sophisticated way Mrs Hornblower got out of the car and, as she did so, Mr Hornblower scratched his bald head. Then he leaned out of the car window and shouted in a nasal voice, 'Back in a minute dear; I'm just going to put a bet on!'

And before driving off again he pumped his horn as loud as he could, as if to tell all the people in the local area that his wife had arrived back from the shops and that he was now off to the bookies.

Across the road from where the young lad stayed a woman came out of her house and went round the back and started taking in the washing. As she removed the clothes pegs from the clothesline, she looked up at the sky and watched a grey cloud cover up the beautiful golden sun. After a moment or two, she shouted to her next door neighbour something about the weather, then something about coming round later. Her neighbour was doing the same as she was.

The young lad watched them, and as the grey cloud passed over the sun the light he noticed faded. This change in the weather of course reminded him of the two contrasting times: night and day. In a wondrous voice, he asked the old man: 'Zephyrman, what happens in the city at night?'

As if to wonder himself, the Zephyrman looked up at the sky, 'Well, my little one, night is certainly different from day.' Then

after thinking about what he was going to say, he added, 'And the people who live for the night are certainly different from the people who live for the day. Everything in the big city you must understand at night is lit up by manmade lights, and for many of them the world changes into a false reality. Places that during the day seem dull and lifeless come alive at night. In the city some people gather in houses and talk and eat and drink, the same way as people do here in the country. Some people go to places and pay to be served and to be entertained. Some people wander around the streets looking for company. Many things are said and done at night that are never said and done in the day. Some people see themselves differently when the light fades. In fact, some people only come out when it is dark; they are called night crawlers.

'However, the young people in the city when it is dark try and have fun; they dance and make merry till the early hours of the morning. But many do not have a choice: for they have to work at night. The good among them serve the merrymakers with a kind heart, and the evil ones among them curse the light. I have even heard it said that people think differently during the day than they do at night. I have also heard it said that everything passes by too quickly at night and is hardly remembered. The late night people usually get up later than the people who live and work during the day.'

As the old man spoke the young lad heard music drifting out from a radio playing in a house nearby, and it made him happy. And as he hummed the popular tune to himself he thought about the people of the night, and he imagined them dancing, or as the Zephyrman had said, 'make merry.' It all seemed so fantastic. He could hardly believe it, for how could people dance and enjoy themselves under manmade lights when the earth was covered by darkness - it was amazing. As he stood there beside the Zephyrman the young lad nodded at the old man, as if he understood the difference between the people who live for the day, and those who live for the night.

Again the old man looked up at the sky through the green leaves above him on the green island. Then after a second or two he sighed and wondered about time, and how the seasons change: 'Yes, the world spins round, my little one, and we know not why. In winter the sun gets up late sometimes around eight o'clock in the morning and goes to bed early around 4 o'clock in the afternoon. In springtime it gets up reasonably early, and in the summer it gets up really early and stays up very late.'

'Just like me!' cried the young lad, 'I don't go to bed till half-past nine - sometimes ten, these nights.'

The Zephyrman laughed, then he told the young lad how at the beginning of the year the earth has to be born again, 'Some people celebrate it like the birth of a child: for it is written man must be born again. We ring out the old and we ring in the new. It is a time for people to start all over again, and make plans for the future. The weather is usually harsh at the beginning of the year; and more often than not it snows and it rains, but somehow the sun pierces the earth and the cycle begins again. The slow movement of time never stops, it only appears to sometimes.'

The young lad hardly heard him, for he was now thinking about last winter: sledging and making snowballs. Then something

hit him, and he asked the old man, 'Zephyrman, where do all the birds go to in the wintertime?'

Once again, in the middle of the green island, the Zephyrman looked up through the trees. Then he said playfully, 'Some of them go on holiday.'

Birds packing up and going on holiday tickled the young lad, 'Where do they go to, Zephyrman?' he asked once more, and laughed.

'They migrate all over the world,' replied the old man, 'The birds, you must understand, know when winter is on its way long before anyone else. They can sense when the sun is moving away from the earth, and at that moment many of them decide to pack up and head for warmer shores. The secret messages come to them in the wind, you see.'

This indeed was a great thing, and the young lad in a moment of wonder asked the old man, 'But how do they know where to go?'

With a wry smile the Zephyrman answered him, 'They travel in the wind, my little friend, and as the wind rises and falls it blows them here and there; for the wind goes all around the world.'

'What a wonderful adventure indeed, to be blown away to another land and to another country,' thought the little lad.

Seeing him interested the Zephyrman added, 'Yes, when the signal is given they all move off, and when they are high in the sky they all take turns at leading the way; more often than not on this wonderful journey they meet other birds and they join them. Some birds travel by night, some birds travel by day, and every year, you know, they stop off at the same places. You see the secrets have been passed on to them in the wind. After the birds have landed they rest, then when the signal is given they move off again. However, sometimes the weather is so severe that they hear the wrong signals, and they get lost, but most of them soon find their way again. You must understand some birds have to migrate, my little one, just to survive.'

At this point, the old man stepped forward a pace, and as he stood there on the little green island he put his arms out wide; he

looked down at the ground as if he were a bird flying through the air. And for a time he bobbed and weaved as if the wind was blowing him this way, then that. It may have been calm on the little green island, but the old man looked as if he were fighting a strong head wind.

‘You look like a paper man on a windy day, Zephyrman!’ shouted the young lad again.

‘Some birds are lucky though, for they can fly so high in the sky that they can look down on aeroplanes. But when the weather is bad, and the wind is against them, they hug the ground and shelter here and there till it is time to fly away again. The travelling birds have to endure the most extreme temperatures, and the most appalling weather conditions,’ then after saying this the Zephyrman, as if exhausted, sat back down up against the old elm tree on the little green island.

Once settled, he continued with his story, ‘Yes, the wind carries all God’s creatures across the sea and across the land. To give themselves a chance the birds before they set out eat as much as they can so as to put on weight. This they do every year.’ As if to increase his weight, the old man puffed his face out and made himself look fat. Then he continued, ‘And when they stopover in another country they fill their stomachs up again so as to have enough strength for the next part of the journey. This knowledge that lies in the wind is passed on from generation to generation. The young birds learn quickly and they never forget what they learn.

‘Do birds ever get scared?’ interrupted the young lad.

‘Yes, of course, birds can tell when a storm is coming and when danger is on its way. They say, you know, that all the disasters in this world are foretold in the wind, and that the birds are the first to get to know about them. Take it from me, my young friend, they can tell in which direction an ill wind is blowing. Our feathered friends can also interpret the signs from the moon and from the stars. Sometimes they fly during the day, and sometimes during the night; and although they all have their favourite routes,

they are sometimes blown off course and find themselves in places they have never been to before.'

Just then into the boy's garden a lovely wagtail flew up onto a branch inside the silver birch tree, and when the Zephyrman noticed the bird he gently nodded and smiled at the young lad beside him. He said in a hushed tone, 'This fellow here has just arrived from another country. He knows fine well the danger that is around him. Look how quick and graceful he is; he does not want to attract any undue attention to himself. He knows the world is a wonderful place, but he also knows it to be an evil place.'

This shocked the young lad, and he quickly glanced back over towards his house - just in case an evil person was lurking nearby. The young lad had not been on holiday yet this year; his mother had said that things were tight. The young lad however loved to travel in his own way. He had somehow grasped the fact that making a journey in his own mind was just as important as jumping on a bus or on a train. One day, however, he hoped that he would be able to fly abroad - just like the birds who follow the wind do. And just then he imagined unusual places and strange people in other parts of the world. Travelling around the world seemed so wonderful to him, it seemed to change the person who made the journey, and in turn the view they had of the world inside of them.

For some unknown reason the wind got up at that moment, and as if to hide themselves the birds flew from the gardens in front of the houses into the trees in the middle of the green island.

The Zephyrman was not worried though. He told the young lad, 'Oh, it's all right the wind is just playing with the land, it likes to do that from time to time. Sometimes the wind likes to change the mood of the day, for it likes to keep people on their toes.' After this he laughed, then added, 'It's not a good thing to be too sure of yourself, you know.'

Once more the young lad gazed way out into the distance till his eye fell on the horizon line. Suddenly he told the old man, 'When I am older, and when the time is right, I will go round the world just like the birds.'

The Zephyrman laughed and said, 'You will need a map, young man, and plenty of money.'

The young lad had not thought about this and, as he looked into the ancient eyes of the Zephyrman, he muttered innocently, 'You mean someone has travelled the world and noted everything down about it.'

The old man smiled, and said, 'Yes, many people have done this.'

After thinking about how this was done, the young lad told the Zephyrman, 'This time last summer I climbed a tree in the middle of the little green island, and when I was up there I looked at the world on all sides,' and just to prove it, he showed the old man which tree it was that he had climbed, 'That one over there.'

Knowing that this was his only reference to date as regards the world around him, apart from the pictures he had seen in newspapers and on TV, he said in a tone, not unlike the Zephyrman, 'The world is full of fields,' then he laughed.

Looking over at the tree that he had climbed the Zephyrman teased him, 'My, that is a big tree, indeed. You did very well, but I tell you beyond the fields and farms there is another world, one that few people get to know.'

The old man stretched himself again, dusted his coat down, then he walked away from the little green island towards the road. Soon he passed the house where the coalman lived with his wife and family, at the far end of the green island. When the Zephyrman got to the top of the hill he noticed a sheepdog; it was crouched down on the grass waiting for something. Suddenly as a car came by, the dog sprang to his feet and chased the car along the road.

The Zephyrman, who thought he had seen everything under the sun, could not believe his eyes: for the daft dog tried to bite the tyre of the moving car, before the car disappeared down the hill. This was nothing new to the young lad; he had seen the dog do this many times before, and anyway he felt happy now for he counted the old man as one of his friends.

So not thinking any more about it, the young lad followed the Zephyrman down the big hill towards where he knew the shops to be. When they got there it seemed quite busy; many people were coming and going. Some of the people seemed to know the young lad, but many of them just stared at him as he passed them by. In fact, one woman stopped him. She laughed and said, 'Have you come to buy something for your mother, then?'

As the young lad walked on he overheard a few people mention something about Mr Hornblower's car and, just as he approached the little group of shops, lo and behold Mr Hornblower's car pulled up opposite the shop, with the huge sign above it that read: Newspapers and Cigarettes. His wife, Mrs Hornblower, got out of the car in her usual fashion, and just as she was about to enter the shop Mr Hornblower pumped the horn, rolled down the window of his brand new car and yelled, 'Remember, honey, get some sweets for the kids!'

It was all a great scene, people were rushing in and out of the shops, jumping in and out of cars. 'Tomorrow must be cancelled, or the shops must be shut,' wondered the young lad.

However, the Zephyrman hardly took any notice of anything going on around him, he just stared at the old church across the road and walked on.

The young lad tried to work out what the old man was thinking about; for he seemed to be preoccupied by something. He noticed that even though the old man seemed to be faraway, he seemed to be at peace with the crazy world around him. Certainly, a lot of people looked at the old man in the threadbare coat, as he walked by them, but no one, he noticed, greeted him.

Presently, he walked passed the small group of shops, and when he came to a shop situated on its own, between the small petrol station and the cafe, the old man stopped walking. Up above the shop the young lad noticed that someone lived there. And when the Zephyrman gazed up at the balcony, in front of the house, he said to the young lad, 'The people who live up there are lucky; for they have a place to go that is shaded from the wind,

sometimes during the day I see them sitting there enjoying themselves in the sun.'

After this the Zephyrman looked through the window at the expensive fashions inside the shop, and to make the young lad laugh he made a funny face at himself in the window. Then he walked inside the entrance of the shop, where two other windows faced each other. This was an area where shoppers could come and look at the goods, before going inside the store. Even though the shop was open, the Zephyrman did not go inside the store. He stood at the entrance inside the porch, then he turned round and put his face up against the pane of glass that ran along the main street. After making another funny face at the boy, he moved both his arms and legs, as if by magic he was going to fly away. As the young lad watched him, he wondered how a man could move both legs and arms upwards at the same time without falling to the ground - he was ever so funny.

Two women walking past looked in at the window of the shop. One woman smiled, then she said in a common voice, 'They say only the rich can afford to go in there, you know.' Then as if to add colour to the story, the woman beside her added, 'I heard that her husband is a drunkard.'

The young lad felt sorry for her husband, for the word when attached to a human being sounded terrible. In fact, for some reason the young lad felt that it was not the man's fault, but that something in the wind had brought this about. 'Maybe that's the man who goes up the lane at night singing and shouting,' he thought to himself.

As he stared inside the shop the young lad suddenly noticed his reflection in the window. Without giving it another thought he went over to where the Zephyrman had stood, and he tried to imitate him. However, when he looked back he noticed that the Zephyrman had disappeared. Then all of a sudden he caught sight of him again across the road, not far from the cafe. After looking both ways to see if Mr Hornblower was tearing up the road in his brand new car, the young lad ran across the road and followed the old man.

When he got near to the old man, the young lad watched the Zephyrman closely. Suddenly, the old man stopped and stared up at the sky again. He started muttering something to himself about the world: 'The light that shines on the earth is from heaven above...'

The young lad thought that it was important for the old man to do this, and he did not want to disturb him. So for something to do, he too looked up at the sky. Then he took out the compass that the old man had given to him. After making the bubble settle in the middle of it, he moved the compass till the line went through the red letter N. With a curious look on his young face, he muttered to himself, just like the Zephyrman: 'We are going in a northerly direction.'

Even though the young lad could see that he was going in a northerly direction he did not know what lay ahead of him, but for some reason because he knew which direction he was going in he felt confident.

After the old man had stopped speaking to himself, he walked on, and he started speaking to the young lad again. 'I used to know this man, you know, that every time he left his village he returned home as soon as the church steeple disappeared out of sight.'

The young lad looked back in the direction of the local shops, and he could just see the familiar steeple of the local church, opposite them, through the tall elm trees.

Not long after this the old man told him something about his life. Apparently, the old man when he was younger did not feel a home in the world, 'Ah, it was a long time ago now. You see I once took a job down the coast, but I didn't like it at all. In fact, I hated the people in the office. They were obscene, boring, bigoted. The office where I worked Monday to Friday, every week, seemed to imprison my free spirit. And day by day the evil ways of the business world seemed to creep into my soul and infect me. I talked to everyone in the office all right, but I didn't like the atmosphere. On the surface everything seemed friendly, but underneath this pretence, I could tell they hated me; self-analysis led me to believe that I was suffering from misanthropy. Looking

back now it seems a funny complaint for a young man to be suffering from,' chuckled the Zephyrman.

After laughing he went on, 'It had all started so well too: I had found a job down the coast, and the pay was reasonable, but after about two weeks things changed. Life became mean, grudging, ghastly. I should have listened to my mate Kenny, for he had told me that I would not be happy there. I remember one day when the silent clock on the office wall read one o'clock, I put my biro pen down, and as usual got ready to go to the canteen. This day, however, I wanted to do something different. I didn't fancy going to the canteen for lunch, or sitting in the rest room area along with the others. No, I wanted to get as far away from the office as possible. So, I said to myself, "I'll go for a walk down to the seashore and sit by the sea, and let my mind drift away." So I locked my drawer, then I walked out of the cold grey building where I worked.'

'I remember the town was packed with people that day, there was some kind of festival going on. It didn't take me that long though to cut through the city centre and reach the sea. When I got to the harbour I walked down the treacherous greasy stone steps and then along the beach. It was a typical unpredictable summer's day. The afternoon sky was bright, and as usual there were one or two ominous dark clouds hovering here and there. It looked as if the weather could change any minute and bring rain, but this did not worry me. Not far from the pier, I sat down on a rock and looked out to sea, and as the sea breeze hit me I seemed to waken up. I watched a little ferry boat slowly make its way across the water to the island opposite. Suddenly, I felt good. However, as if to spoil the dream some of the men who worked beside me in the office streamed into my consciousness, and when I looked back towards the town, in the direction of the building where I worked, I despaired. It seemed to me that all they wanted to do was annoy me, even when I was not there. Every day, I had to listen to them boasting. It was always the same: what they would do when their boat came in, how they would travel here and there, and how they would spend their money. Yes, one day they would

all live that perfect life, in that perfect world that they had always dreamed about. The unusual thing was that they all sounded the same - isn't that strange.'

'The women were no better. They wandered around the office every day looking for someone to put down, even the new girl who had just started was getting into it. It seemed that if you did not conform to their standards, then you were fair game for attack. Nothing much had changed in the two years since I had started working there. Feeling fed up, I turned round and gazed at the sea, and I tried to block out all the evil thoughts in my mind. Mercifully, the movement of the water eased my soul and the pain inside me ebbed away. I was conscious of the fact, as I gazed at the water, that the rhythm of the sea calmed my inner nature. The waves as they swept up onto the shore made me feel good, and all the sounds around the seaside town were now bright and wonderful. Wondering what it was that brought about the change, I started to think about the nature of sound. I had never really thought about it before. The sounds that came from the sea, I felt were musical.'

'And as I sat there thinking about this suddenly an old man appeared beside me. I guess he would have been about what age I am now. I will never forget that image. He was dressed in a long tattered coat and a soft hat; he smiled at me. To make conversation I said to him, "Well, I tell you I'm glad to get out of the office just for a break." The old man as he looked out to sea introduced himself to me, "They call me the Windman," he said, "for I am always walking along the beach and listening to the sea." I laughed, and then replied, "That's an unusual name." We talked for a time, then the Windman told me, "The birth of sound happened a long time ago, and if you listen closely you can still hear all the sounds, for they are brought to the shore by the wind. The sounds you hear today echo the original sounds born in nature. Somehow they travel through time to where we are now. In fact, even synthetic sounds that are made by man in the modern world are still connected to the original sounds expressed at the beginning of creation." He was right. '

The young lad laughed. Then he shouted out in a cheeky voice, 'So you are just like the Windman, Zephyrman!'

'Yes, something told me that what this man was saying was true: that all the sounds you hear emanate from the beginning of time. And in a strange way if you listen closely enough to the wind you can still hear them, before they return back to the earth,' answered the Zephyrman.

The young lad thought long and hard about what he had just heard. Then he declared enthusiastically, 'I will be like you, Zephyrman, I will listen to the wind, and follow it wherever it leads me.'

As he walked on the Zephyrman nodded slowly, then he continued with his story, 'Well, the Windman sat down beside me on one of the rocks by the sea, and I remember him telling me: "The best instrument, my friend, for transmitting human feelings is the human voice." And he was right.'

Thinking that it was the right thing to do the young lad started singing the song "All days are rhymes" that the Zephyrman had taught him: *And when you laugh don't be afraid the moon and stars are the love in your heart...*

Even though he heard the young lad's sweet voice, the old man continued talking, 'As we talked about the origin of sound all of a sudden I could hear music as if from the ancient past. And in my imagination I saw minstrels wandering about telling people all about the wonderful nature of sound. The singers as they wandered from town to town were singing their songs and everyone seemed happy. The music from their instruments and their mouths somehow lifted the people out of their time - even when things were bad. The sounds of their voices somehow reflected the rhythm of the cosmos. I asked the Windman what instruments they used. He said that they used strange instruments in ancient times: one was like a harp, another was like a recorder.

He said that people knew they were at the beginning of a never-ending time scale that would go on forever. He also told me that if you listen closely enough to the wind you can still hear them singing their hymns of praise to this or that god. The Windman then went on to say that tragedy was everywhere in the ancient world, and to confront this people would tell stories about how the fates had conspired to bring it all about. There was no use moaning about life. Life was for the living. Tragedy was to be accepted for some good would eventually come out of it. And for that reason their voices would journey on through time over seas and land. The music of their words in some strange way would reach another time, like the water that falls onto the shore from the sea.

‘The Windman then told me that some clever chap had studied the players as they wandered around the country. And that this man being fond of maths and logic made up scales so that people would know what was happening when someone played an instrument or sang a song. This system that he developed tied music to the world. However, different scales had different effects, some were sad, some were easygoing. They called them modes. The Windman’s words, if truth be told, cast a spell on me, and at the time it was more than I could understand. The music from the past made me think about many things: how it was organised into a religious service? I thought about how the Psalms were put to music, and how life came through them to chase away evil spirits. Then I asked the Windman what songs the soldiers sang before they went into battle? What notes did their trumpets play to instruct them to act in a certain way? What lullabies did the women sing to their children to make them fall asleep? I asked him all sorts of questions. How can one voice hold the meaning of a song while the others wander off hear and there? How can one or two voices echo the main part of the song while the others sing their own words? How can two voices perform together, then move away from each other?’ And do you know what he said to me?’

‘No,’ replied the young lad quickly.

‘He told me to listen to the wind.’

Feeling part of the drama the young lad laughed, then he added, ‘Everything lies in the wind.’

The Zephyrman continued, ‘I thought about all the voices all over the world singing in churches praising God, the mass of voices all together, yet apart, the song forever moving towards its destination, just like the way the clouds do through the sky.’

The Zephyrman seemed to get caught up in the mood of the moment, and trying to understand it all the old man searched the sky. Then he turned to the young lad and said, ‘Yes, I believe musical notes are carried in the wind, and it is only when someone plays them on the piano, or some other instrument that you start to understand what this world is all about.’

The young lad thought about the old black piano in his uncle’s house, and for the first time he realised how music was played. The old man seeing him interested added profoundly, ‘Every note that appears in life has its own relationship within the world.’

The young lad nodded as if he understood. Then he said quietly, ‘My mum sometimes sings to me.’

As he walked on, the Zephyrman beamed and said, ‘Ah, there is no instrument like the human voice for expressing emotions. I guess that is why the Italians came up with opera, for music above all things must be wonderful, dramatic, and life escaping.’

This made the young lad wonder to himself, ‘Is mum an opera star?’

At this point, the old man looked as if he was just about to break into a song, and the young lad held his breath. However, feeling relaxed and at ease with the world, the Zephyrman danced on the street, ‘I can just imagine it all those years ago: people in Venice crammed into theatres and ale houses listening to music, their faces full of joy. Music you see takes us out of ourselves, and transports us to another time.’ When he stopped dancing he said, ‘It also has a ceremonial function. Did you know, my little one, that at one time people were welcomed everywhere they went by music?’

The young lad shook his head and said, 'No, I didn't know that. When did this happen?'

'In a time when kings and queens made people feel at home, my young friend.' The young lad felt that what the old man had said was true as regards music - yet it seemed so fantastic. 'I mean how can the human voice reflect what the human heart wants it to say?' he openly wondered.

'Whatever it is that lies hidden behind the clouds up there can make the world a better place,' replied the Zephyrman. Then in a sombre tone, he added, 'But remember this, my little one, only children understand life.'

After the shops they came upon a golf course; it was situated on the left hand side of the road on the way into the city. When the young lad looked to his left he found to his amazement smoky coloured blue hills far-off in the distance, and as he stared at them he wondered how they were formed. The clouds looked so strange with the hills above them. In fact, to his young mind the sky, as it mixed in with the land down below, seemed to be part of another world. How that could be, he did not know? However, he soon forgot about this, for he had to catch up with the old man. 'Hey, wait for me, Zephyrman!' he shouted after him.

His little legs ran as fast as they could, and thankfully it didn't take him long to catch up with the old man. As the young lad walked behind the Zephyrman, he noticed a lot more cars go by now to and from the city. Many people stared at him as the cars flew by. Naturally, he smiled at the people in their cars, but the majority of them he noticed did not smile back at him.

When he finally caught up with the Zephyrman he heard him talking to himself again, but he could not make out what he was saying, for the old man was talking in riddles. 'Everything that comes from the sky returns to the earth. All things must pass. The new becomes the old, and the old becomes the new...'

The Zephyrman stopped walking and for a moment he stared up at the sky. Then he said wondrously: 'Eternal words echo through the universe for ever and ever. We can only hear them by listening to the wind,' then he moved on.

When the old man walked on, the young lad followed him and soon the little group of shops were far behind them. When they passed the big green park, where one colourful flag stood, suddenly a small white ball came bouncing out onto the road, and bounced into a garden opposite them on the other side of the street. The young lad laughed for the man who had hit the ball over the fence looked angry. He was shaking his fist at the boy as if it were his fault. All of a sudden, a rainbow appeared above them and the young lad was overcome by an overwhelming feeling of joy and happiness. He could not explain it, but he knew it was a rainbow, for his sister had shown him a drawing of one last week when she came back from Sunday school. The rainbow looked wonderful, and as he counted all the colours running through it he thought everyone that went under a rainbow would in some way be safe and secure, for what lay on the other side he believed to be good, 'Yes, everything will be all right he thought to himself. My journey will be safe. I will follow the old man, then return home, and then I will tell everyone about my great adventure.'

Even though the air was quite still, the sky was a strange colour and dark clouds drifted here and there. Wherever he looked all the colours on the landscape around him were beautiful and vibrant. More cars went by and things generally seemed to get busier, as they went towards the city. They past many shops, a cinema, and then it seemed to be all houses, and then a godforsaken area where no one seemed to live or work. Thankfully, when they passed this depressing area, the old man cheered the young lad up with another story, 'See that business over there?' he said pointing.

'The one with all the headstones?' answered the young lad.

'Yes,' replied the old man, 'Well, I used to know a man who worked there. He had a white beard and a bad leg; for years he wrote the names of the dead onto the stones. And do you know that with every name he wrote he said a little prayer for them.'

The young lad looked up at the sign that read: Memorial Service, he knew by the picture that these stones were placed on top of peoples' graves when they were dead. After this nothing was

said for a time and they walked on. Then in a moment of wonder the city appeared.

When they had crossed the bridge the young lad watched the people walk around the city streets. He thought at first they were anonymous. They appeared to be very different from the people from his village; for some unknown reason they acted superior. On the outskirts of the city the young lad thought the town people funny. In fact, very few people looked at him as he walked by them. They seemed to his young mind to be unhappy, it was as if there were not enough things in life for them to do, or not enough time to do them in. They all seem to be in such a mad hurry to get somewhere.

The young lad did not know why they were unhappy, or where they were going to. The other thing he noticed was that the people of the city did not speak to each other, or acknowledge another person's presence, with a nod, or a word, like they did in the country. He would ask the old man when he caught up with him why they were so unhappy, and why they did not say the usual things to each other like: "How are you? Where are you going, today? Take care."

He noticed too that the buildings around the edge of the city seemed to act as a fortress, and the young lad wondered if the people of the city were imprisoned inside it. He muttered this to

himself, 'Maybe they are locked inside the city and cannot get out, and this is why all the people are so unhappy.'

Just then the old man wandered into a shop inside the city and stood at the counter. The small establishment sold chickens, and meat. Not thinking too much about it the young lad followed him inside the shop. He took it that this was what his mother called a butcher's shop. Everything seemed in order so he stood in the queue next his friend the Zephyrman.

Suddenly a woman just like his mother turned round and said in a kind voice, 'And what are you going to buy then?' and everyone in the shop started to laugh.

The young lad smiled, however when the woman turned away from him, she said to another woman next to her, 'We had better inform the police; I think he is lost.'

After speaking to the man who owned the shop the Zephyrman wandered outside and the young lad followed him back out onto the busy street. Near the main square, the young lad noticed there was a restaurant called The Beautiful Garden. The restaurant seemed dull and uninteresting, but when the waiter came out of it whistling a tune, in a strange way he seemed to brighten up the whole place. First, he cleaned the tables outside, then he started to set them. Just like the boy's mother he placed a knife opposite a fork, wiped some crumbs off the table onto the floor, then he looked up. Seeing the old man and the young lad standing on the pavement, outside the restaurant, he smiled to himself. Then in a friendly voice, he shouted, 'Looks like a good day today, Zephyrman.'

The Zephyrman looked up at the sky and smiled back. Then he said, 'Yes, it's not a bad day, my friend,' then after another look at the sky above him, he added thoughtfully, 'But change is on its way, my friend, I can feel it in the air.'

The man who worked in the restaurant laughed. Then he shouted to someone working inside the kitchen, 'Look who's here!'

Presently, a smart man in a double breasted suit came out. He too picked up something from a table. It seemed the natural thing to do when you came outside. Then he looked over at some of the

people who were sitting outside in The Beautiful Garden restaurant. After some hesitation he waved his arms in the air and cried, 'Ah, my friend, the Zephyrman! How are you sir? Come in and have tea with us. Please bring your young friend along too.'

This sounded awfully good and to show that he was pleased the young lad smiled back at the man. However, when he looked back towards the street he could not help but notice the beggars milling around outside, and he wondered why they were not given the same invitation as he was. One of the men, the young lad thought, looked like the man who stood opposite the local pub, but it wasn't him for this man was a lot younger than he was, and his nose had been flattened.

'Maybe it's his brother,' the young lad marvelled to himself, as he stared at him.

Then he glanced at all the people just walking by on the street outside the Beautiful Garden Restaurant. He wondered where they all came from, and where they were all going to. The city people were very different indeed. They looked as if they came from all over the world: 'That must be it, they are foreigners,' thought the young lad.

'How kind you are, sir!' shouted the Zephyrman. Then as he sat down at a table near to the pavement, he sighed. 'Yes, life is indeed wonderful when you have got friends.'

Feeling weary the young lad sat down too, and for a time the young lad watched the city people walk by till they made him dizzy. Then he stared at the old man sitting opposite him. In a comic manner, the Zephyrman opened his old coat and put his white napkin down inside the collar of his tattered shirt. He grinned at the young lad. Right away, the owner started telling the old man something about his life. And as the Zephyrman listened to him, he nodded as if he understood every word. After a time the manager appeared and clapped his hands. He said in a happy sing-song voice, 'Right what can I get you, sir?'

In a voice to match his comic manner, the Zephyrman replied, 'A pot of tea, sir, and something fizzy to drink for my young friend here.'

The Zephyrman chatted for a time about life and the ways of the world, and of course about the weather. Then the old man turned to the young lad and declared, 'Here in the city today influential people will make important decisions that will effect you and I tomorrow. People everywhere know this, and they watch the city people so as to understand the future. They do not listen to the wind.'

'What are you doing on your own in town young man?' asked the waiter politely, as he stood at the boy's table.

Not thinking much about it, the young lad answered him, 'I follow the wind, sir.'

The waiter laughed as if some strange force had tickled him under his arms. Then he put his little pad inside his waistcoat pocket and walked away.

With a smile on his old face, the Zephyrman continued, 'Not everyone can read the signs though, and because of this the city people live for the day, and not for the good of the land.'

When his tea arrived the Zephyrman became animated; it was as if he was now on stage and had to perform. He picked up the small pot of tea in front of him on the table and, as he poured himself a cup, he nodded to himself many times. Then to the amusement of all the people sitting in The Beautiful Garden Restaurant, after he had had taken a drink of tea the old man stood up and started dancing. Some of the people in the restaurant who were having lunch laughed at him. The young lad thought it funny to see the old man dance, and he laughed along with the others in the restaurant.

When he had finished dancing the Zephyrman smiled, for he did not mind all the people looking at him. In fact, he ignored them and gazed at some of the town birds who had come down from the sky to wander around the pavement outside the restaurant. The Zephyrman watched them closely.

Just then a seagull came close up to his table and grabbed a piece of bread from under his chair. The young boy felt that the birds seemed to be bolder in the city than in the country, it was as if the dominant threat was now between humans and not animals.

The Zephyrman smiled at the young lad and, as he once more picked up his napkin from the table, he looked towards the heavens. Then after wiping his mouth, he said, 'Have you noticed that the city birds are tamer than the ones in the country?'

'Yes, I have,' answered the young lad right away.

After paying for her coffee a very attractive young city lady came over and said to the Zephyrman, 'I didn't know you were a good dancer. Where did you learn to dance like that?' and as she smiled at him, she added, 'My father used to dance like that, you know.'

Right away the old man stood up and touched his old hat. Then in a sensitive voice, he replied, 'A beautiful woman taught me to dance like that.' Then he added tenderly, 'We used to go to the dancing every weekend,' and as he sat back down he looked over at the young lad again and he sighed, 'Ah' to be young and alive is a great thing.'

All of a sudden a smart business man, dressed in a pinstripe suit sitting near by, piped up, 'Have you seen her lately?' And when no reply was forthcoming he added gruffly, 'The beautiful girl who taught you to dance?'

The Zephyrman did not look at him, but he replied cleverly, 'Everywhere I go, I see her.'

The young lady beside the Zephyrman smiled at him, then she turned and sneered at the young business man sitting close by. She then gently touched the Zephyrman on the shoulder as if to tell him that she understood. Then she made her way out of The Beautiful Garden Restaurant.

For some reason, the Zephyrman got up and started dancing again. When he eventually stopped he turned to the young lad and said, 'In life when something beautiful comes along you must always acknowledge it - never let it pass you by without saying something about it, either to yourself or someone else. The beautiful young lady has made me feel young again.'

The young lad thought the Zephyrman ever so funny, and even though the gorgeous young lady had disappeared the old

man touched his hat again as a mark of respect to her, as if she were still there in the Beautiful Garden Restaurant beside him.

When the Zephyrman finally sat back down again beside the young lad he seemed happy and he yawned several times. Then he shut his eyes for a couple of minutes. The young lad wondered if the old man was praying so he did not say anything. However, as soon as he opened his eyes the young lad bombarded him with questions: 'Where do the city people come from? Where are they going to? Who are they? Do they know each other? Have the children of the city all got mothers and fathers, just like me? Will we meet when we are older?'

Amazingly, at that moment the sun came through the clouds and the city sparkled as if it had just been built, and all the people going past the little restaurant seemed to be transformed into happy go lucky people rather than hypnotic robots.

Some of the city people going towards their appointments, passing by the Beautiful Garden Restaurant, looked over at the Zephyrman. They seemed to respect the old man. The young lad could not understand this transformation, for he knew they had not seen him dance. Anyway, after much thought the young lad just put it down to whatever it is that lies in the wind that makes people do the things they do. And at that moment the future seemed so bright and wonderful to the young lad that he felt like dancing, just like the Zephyrman. In fact, he stood up to dance, but a waiter came by and placed a colourful drink on the table of the smart business man who was sitting close by. 'Better sit still,' he told himself, 'don't want to get into trouble.' Although the Zephyrman heard all the young lad's questions he did not answer him. Instead he lit his small pipe and puffed away quite happily.

When the Zephyrman finished his second cup of tea he sighed and hummed the tune that he had taught the young lad earlier on: '*All days are rhymes...*'

Then he stretched himself, and rubbed his hands, 'Well, can't stay here all day, my young friend. We will need to get going.'

Just then two business men, making their way back from an appointment, spotted the Zephyrman sitting in the cafe bar. One

said to the other, 'Let's go and make fun of that old codger over there.'

And as soon as they came upon him they tried to make fun of him, for they knew that the Zephyrman sometimes made speeches in public. The Zephyrman knew what was in their minds and as he watched them approach he nodded to himself, and to relax he continued to sing the words from the song, *All days are rhymes: 'Sunday is Monday, Tuesday is fine, Wednesday is moody, Thursday is mine...'*

'Ah, Mr Zephyrman, what way is the wind blowing today, then?' asked the first businessman.

The Zephyrman nodded at him, then he repeated his famous axiom: 'Stay on this side of time, my friend.'

The two men roared with laughter. Then one said to the other, 'What a fool!'

'For brothers one thing is sure Judgement Day will come for us all,' added the Zephyrman in a harsh tone.

Even to the young lad it was plain to see that the two businessmen could not see beyond the objects of this world.

'When will this happen, then, Zephyrman?' one of the men asked, in a menacing voice.

Then the other one added, 'Yes, when will this great storm come, and blow us all away. Come on tell us you old fool.'

The Zephyrman, hearing them mock him, stood up and stared at the sky. Then moving his hands towards their faces, he spoke to the two men in a wondrous tone, 'It is because of all the pollution the earth can hardly breathe. However, it is not for me to say when the great storm will come, only that one day soon the earth will cry out and in a moment everything will change.'

The young lad noticed that the businessmen did not seem to hear the old man's words; it was as if the old man spoke to them in another language.

As he stood there the Zephyrman stared at the businessmen. In an angry voice, he lectured them on their evil ways, 'Oh, you can take what you want from the earth, my friends, but there is always a price to pay. Everything has to be balanced in life. Strong

winds will uproot the evildoers in this society; in fact they are gathering as we speak.'

One of the fat cat businessmen laughed and said, 'But we hardly get storms in this country.'

The Zephyrman smiled at him, then he added prophetically, 'Everything comes in the wind, good and evil; you will understand this when you are older.'

The two businessmen roared with laughter again. Then one said, 'You are going to pay us back with words - is that it?'

'Yes, everything on this side of time is said in words, and words turn to deeds,' replied the old man solemnly.

It was plain to see that even though the Zephyrman stood there in his old coat and hat, he seemed much more content and at peace with the world than the two businessmen who were dressed in smart suits and ties. The two businessmen, the boy felt, were blowing themselves up with false pride. All this fascinated him and in a strange way instead of being angry at the businessmen, he felt sorry for them.

Just as the businessmen walked away one laughed and said to the other, in a menacing voice, 'I think I will phone our friend the Chief Inspector of police and get that old codger arrested.'

Not long after this a young man entered the city from the same direction as the old man and the young lad had. This young man had a sad pale face, and he walked with a limp. As he limped passed the Beautiful Garden Restaurant, he looked at the young lad and the old man sitting at the table near to the pavement. When he came to the table of the Zephyrman, he stopped, and stared at the old man. Suddenly his face lit up, and he cried, 'Goodness me, it's the man who follows the wind!'

Immediately, the old man turned round and said, 'Yes, that's me.'

In a happy sad sort of voice the young man with the limp told the old man, 'I have had a bit of bad luck recently, Zephyrman. I was jumped the other night and robbed. I was lucky to get away with my life. They pulled me into a doorway and robbed me of all my possessions.'

Hearing the truthful tone in his voice, the Zephyrman stood up and asked the young man to join him.

So, feeling he was among friends the young man sat down and spoke to the old man about what life had been like before and after his accident. He finished up by saying, 'Things have been tough, Zephyrman,' before he looked down at his feet.

Suddenly, the young man with the limp smiled at the boy, then he pushed his woollen hat up off his face onto his forehead. The bruises that he had received from the robbery could quite clearly be seen on the brow of his head. It was strange for even though he had had bad luck recently, the young lad felt that he seemed a lot happier than the two businessmen who had just left the restaurant. Unlike the two businessmen, this man did not hate the earth.

Incredibly the old man said what the young lad was thinking, 'Well, even though you have been through the wars, my friend, you seem in a lot better spirits than the two men who have just left my table.'

After a while the conversation closed, and the Zephyrman wished him all the best. Then the young man limped away. Presently, an ex merchant seaman with a boozy face, black suit and white hair came wandering up the street. The young lad wondered what the Zephyrman would say to him. He wondered if he would chase him away. The boozy-faced man smiled at the Zephyrman, and he too stopped and had a word with him.

'Where are you going today, my friend?' asked the Zephyrman.

The man's boozy-old face laughed, then he cracked a joke, 'I'm taking this to the pawn, then I'm going for a drink,' and as he said this he looked down at the white carrier bag he was carrying.

The old merchant sailor smiled at the young lad. In a rough tone, he added, 'You are far from home, just wait till your mother gets a hold of you,' then he roared with laughter, not unlike the Zephyrman.

The young lad was amazed at how the Zephyrman and the old merchant sailor hit it off, they seemed to understand each

other pretty well. The old merchant sailor said in a happy tone to the Zephyrman that he was looking for a friend of his, 'I'm going to tap him for some money for a drink,' he jested.

The Zephyrman nodded, but he said nothing, and it seemed to the young lad that the old sailor was trying to get something out of the old man who follows the wind.

The sailor's old glazed eyes were smiling now, 'I remember I used to cycle through here to the main square when I was a boy,' he told him. Then he complained about his knees, 'Now, I hobble through it,' and after he laughed, he touched his knee, then his cheery voice added, 'I think I'd better get the last rites.'

Feeling in a good mood the Zephyrman laughed with him, then he muttered his favourite phrase again, 'Stay on this side of time.'

Looking up at the merchant seaman, the young lad cried, 'Everything lies in the wind!'

'Yes, I suppose it does,' muttered the old merchant seaman, 'Well, I'll need to get on my way,' he lamented, then he made his way towards the town square.

The young lad wondered where all the people went to, who wandered towards the main square, 'It must be awfully crowded there he thought to himself. He smiled at the Zephyrman then, after moving his legs under the table, he gazed at the old man. With great enthusiasm, he asked him, 'Do you know everyone Zephyrman?'

The old man sighed and looked towards the western sky, and as he looked up at the sun, half hidden by a cloud, he told him: 'Aye, it's a great life, my lad, if you don't weaken.'

A strange man with a face like a pixie then came wandering along the busy street. He had the same kind of boozy complexion as the old merchant seaman, but his face was more polished, and he was smartly dressed. When the pixie man came upon the young lad, he noticed that even though the pixie man was younger than the Zephyrman, the pixie man thought himself superior to him. This superiority seemed a vain thing to the young lad.

In a squeaky posh voice, the stranger said, 'It looks as if it will stay dry today.'

Do you know who this is? exclaimed the Zephyrman, as he stood up.

The young lad did not know, and he shook his head. 'This is the town councillor. This man is in charge of all the taxes, and with all the money he gathers in he has got to provide a service on behalf of all the people. He has a big office in the main square.'

He was a strange fellow indeed; for the pixie man had a jolly face, but his eyes were sad.

The Zephyrman wondered why he was not travelling around in his big limo today, like he usually does. In a sad voice the town councillor replied, 'Well, I used to be the town councillor, but they have sacked me; however I am quite confident that I will be reinstated today.' With contempt he looked at the boy. Then all of

a sudden like a child, he added, 'They are always sacking me at this time of year.'

The Zephyrman looked at the young lad opposite him, and he said with a charming smile. 'This is a fine young man, and I hope when he grows up he will be able to come to the city and get a job.'

Under pressure the town councillor stuttered, 'Oh, I'm sure the young lad will grow up to be a fine young man,' then he laughed as he wondered about the future, 'I'm sure he will get a job - that is if there are any jobs left by the time he grows up.'

The Zephyrman man smiled at the young lad, and told him not to worry. 'People in power may know how to collect taxes, but they know very little about what lies in the wind. They only react to events in time and space.'

After the Zephyrman had said this the young lad noticed that the town councillor tried to smile, but he couldn't. Soon the pixie man hurried away saying to himself, as he went on, 'Well, I must try and reinstate myself, they can't thrown me out of work just like that...'

After he had gone, the young lad asked the Zephyrman, 'Why have they sacked him? Is he a bad man?'

Just when everything seemed quiet a horrible looking man appeared and stared at the Zephyrman. The young lad was frightened, and he stood up and got ready to run away. However, the Zephyrman looked at the horrible man, and then he looked up to the sky, as if unconcerned. The horrible man seemed to know all about the Zephyrman, and how he searched for things in the wind. He smiled at the young lad, but no sincerity came through his smile. This made the young lad wonder why he smiled at him when it was obvious he was not happy.

Even though he didn't look at him, the old man seemed to know all about the horrible man, and he said to him, 'It's an ill wind that blows you here today.'

The horrible man grunted, 'What do you know about the weather, old man.'

Presently, the horrible man made a face at the young lad as if he wanted to play with him. Then he sneered at him. With mournful eyes, he looked over at some people sitting outside in the restaurant, and mocked the ordinary everyday scene. In a strange voice, he talked about everything to the Zephyrman, all sorts of artistic things, but in a strange way he appeared to only like them for himself, which made him even more bizarre. The Zephyrman talked to him, but it was obvious that the horrible man did not take anything in. The young lad thought that the world had been unkind to him, and that is why he had closed his heart to the world.

When the horrible man went away, the Zephyrman seemed angry. However, diplomatically he said to the young lad, 'He has never changed that man, he has always been the same.'

'You mean he has always been horrible,' uttered the little lad.

'Oh that's very good,' laughed the Zephyrman.

The boy did not realise that he had said anything funny, and he wondered what to say next.

Putting down his napkin the old man cried, 'Well, we can't sit here all day, my young friend, let's head for the main square and I will show you where the town councillor works.'

So, the Zephyrman, after he had paid his bill, wandered in the direction of the main square, and the young lad followed him. Then for some unknown reason the old man got very angry, 'It won't take us long,' he grunted, as they walked along.

Something was in the air, and the young lad searched the wind to see if he could understand what it was. It appeared to the young lad that the Zephyrman's gentle manner had been upset by something. Trying not to worry about it the young lad, as they walked through the city streets together, whistled the tune that the old man had taught him.

When they got to the main square the old man sat down on a bench right in the middle of the town, and the young lad joined him. People were dotted all over the square, some of them were taking pictures of the big building where the town councillor worked. It was a grand building indeed. Like tourists, they both

watched the city people go past them. The people came from ever direction, some of them walked towards the main square, while others walked away from it. The young lad noticed that the city people seemed to sleepwalk by the square as if in a dream; it was as if they dare not look at the sinful world around them.

‘There must be something in what the old man had said about the world being an evil place,’ thought the young lad, as he watched the people go by.

Suddenly, out of the blue the Zephyrman jumped off the park bench and faced the big building in the town square. He puffed out his chest, and stood there looking angry. It appeared to the young lad that the people who worked inside the grand building had made him this way.

After a moment or two, the Zephyrman shouted out loud: ‘Justice! The people want justice!’

The old man seemed to direct all his anger at those in power whom he said worked inside the grand building, in the middle of the town square. He stared for a time at the dark building where all the decisions were made, and when one or two people stopped and stared at him this only made matters worse.

Feeling very much part of the occasion, the Zephyrman made a grand speech: ‘Good citizens here me. The day is fast approaching when the evildoers will be brought to justice. What has been hidden from the world will soon be revealed. The wind of change is coming this way, and it will bring destruction and death to many. Good people the evildoers who have worked only for themselves will soon be revealed, and the people who have been neglected will rise up against them and tear down all that they have put in place. Those who have, will have not, and those who have not, will soon be made whole. The devil who roams around from place to place will turn on his own and there will be many who will never again be at peace again in the world...’

As the Zephyrman was shaking his fist at the people who worked in the big black building, in the middle of the town square, two men dressed in green uniforms came running out of the grand building and got a hold of him. After a fierce struggle, the old man

was led away. However, he turned towards the young lad and shouted to him: 'Remember my words, my young friend, if you follow the wind: stay on this side of time.'

With a struggle he was taken away towards the front of the big building in the town square, and once there he was put into a black car by two policemen. Some people looked on, but the majority of folk who had witnessed the incident did not seem to care, or mind. They just strolled by as if it had never happened. Presently, the car disappeared in amongst the busy traffic.

Naturally, the young lad was frightened and he wondered what to do. Feeling quite numb, the young lad stared at some of the people inside the cars going round the main square. He thought someone would stop and help the old man. When no one came forward to help, he wondered to himself, 'How do I get home from here? What will I do?'

As the silent tears ran down his young face, he stared at some of the people passing by him. Fortunately, as he stared, he remembered what his dad had told him: 'When you are in trouble son, say a little prayer.'

When he lifted his head he remembered he had the compass that the old man had given to him, and at that moment he was sure he heard the Zephyrman's voice say to him again: 'If you follow the wind: stay on this side of time.'

As he looked around him the young lad remembered the direction that he had come from, and after a minute or two he slowly made his way back through the city streets. The streets were now crowded with blank unhappy faces. Thankfully, the young lad soon came to the bridge, that he and the old man had not long ago crossed. It was strange for this time when he looked down at the water below, he felt cut off from the earth. He could not understand it. The water that reflected the sky above, down below, now seemed murky and evil.

On the way out of the city strange thoughts started to creep into his mind, 'You should be heading in the other direction. You are going the wrong way!' but he ignored them.

He could see that in the middle of the bridge a fat boy was annoying another young lad and, when the young lad passed them, he heard the fat boy say to the other lad, 'You have got a rare face for punching,' then the fat boy laughed at him, and hit him on the face.

The young lad hurried on, thinking, 'If that had happened in the country someone would have come out of their house and sorted the fat boy out. 'Town people are strange. The city seems to have a power all of its own. I wish I were home.'

Just in case some dark force drew him back to the city he did not look behind him. He felt that the city was like a magnet: for as soon as you caught sight of it something drew you towards it. One or two old dogs came over the bridge and looked at him. And after the lights had changed colour, the cars slowly crept over the bridge heading towards the city, and the strange faces inside them stared at the young lad once again.

'Why are they so unhappy,' the young lad wondered. 'Maybe the city is a prison, right enough.'

The noise from the traffic was quite terrific now, and when a woman tried to cross the road she nearly got knocked down. She screamed at the driver: 'Watch where you're going, yah idiot!' The car that nearly hit her seemed to echo her voice before trying to smother it. This was the way of the city, and the young lad was starting to understand it. A bus roared by and a young man, about twenty in a dark suit holding a plastic bag, turned round and shouted at the woman, 'Come on, hurry up!'

The young lad ignored them, and he looked at the compass again just to make sure he was going in the right direction. He heard the chime of an old clock somewhere faraway in the distance, and then he noticed a fork in the road, and an old grey church right in the middle of it.

On the other side of the bridge a young man with dirty blond hair and colourful clothes came towards him. When he got close to the young lad he came right up to him and said, 'Let me see that, you little squirt.'

The young lad got such a fright that he stuffed the compass into his pocket as quick as he could. As he stared at the angry youth, he thought he heard the voice of the Zephyrman say, 'Watch out, for evil is everywhere in this world.'

The young man with the dirty blonde hair and the colourful clothes seemed to relax. He said in a sly voice, 'Are you lost, then, son?'

Feeling that the best thing to do was to be friendly, the young lad smiled at him. Then he quickly made up an excuse, 'I have got to meet my mum and dad on the other side of the bridge,' and he went by him as quick as he could.

The young man with the dirty blond hair and colourful clothes tried to grab him, but just at that moment a man in a smart business suit, who was walking over the bridge into the city, stared at him. Thankfully, this seemed to stop the young man with the dirty blond hair and colourful clothes from doing anything to the young lad, and he ran away from him over the bridge and out of the city.

On the other side of the city, he met a woman. She was young and beautifully dressed. The young lady, seeing the young lad lost, asked him in a motherly voice, 'Where are you going, then?'

'I'm going home,' replied the young lad.

She looked over her shoulder away from the city. Then she said in a different tone, 'Is your home far from here.'

Hearing no answer, she asked him, 'Does your mother know where you are, then?'

The young lad cleverly answered, 'She always seems to know where I am,' and then he smiled at her.

The young woman smiled back at him. Then she said, 'Why not come home with me, and meet my two sons and my older daughter,' and she laughed.

Even at such a young age he could feel that things were not right with her, and to be on the safe side the young lad replied, 'I'm looking for my friend, the Zephyrman. Have you seen him?'

She must have heard about the old man, for she answered him in a strange singsong voice, 'No one knows which direction he goes in. If you follow him you will get lost.'

The young lad knew that the old compass would help him, and he could monitor the position of the sun as it moved from east to west, and of course he would listen to the wind like the old man had taught him to do: 'If the birds can travel around the world without any help from anyone, then I can do it too,' he reassured himself.

For something to do, he showed the compass to the woman, but after laughing at him she said, 'Just you wait here son; I'll be back in a minute,' then she walked away towards the city.

He did not think that he would see her again, for the city would surely swallow her up like it did everyone else. She would no doubt forget about him as soon as she saw the wonderful colourful shops, and all the wonderful things they had to sell in their windows.

As he made his way out of the city the buildings on both sides of the road, where people lived, seemed so strange to him. And as he walked on he noticed that hardly any people came out of them. 'Town people are strange,' he kept saying to himself.

Most of the people who were travelling into town in their cars stared at the young lad; however one or two young boys and girls waved at him as if to wish him good luck on his journey home.

Thankfully, just before the fork in the road he came across a very interesting building. Seeing the door was ajar he popped his head in. It was quite fantastic, there were bits of cars, washing machines, sinks, guitars, lampshades, books, and record players. In fact, bits of everything seemed to be lying around this place.

After searching here and there, he spotted an old rag and bone man in a tattered suit and cloth cap, sitting behind a jumbled up desk at the back of the shop. The young lad had seen men like this before in the country. He thought his jolly bashed face funny; he could see that he was speaking to someone on the telephone. He seemed to collect things that people did not want. Just then the jolly rag and bone man laughed. In a strange way the sound of

laughter seemed to the young lad to represent all the wonderful colours in life. On reflection, he laughed like the Zephyrman. This puzzled the young lad, and he reckoned, 'Maybe only certain people in life can understand what it is that makes them happy.'

The rag and bone man caught the young lad standing there in the doorway, and his happy sad face seemed to stare at him, as if he had caught a glimpse of his own reflection back in time. The young lad smiled back, but thought he had better not go in, for he knew that he had a long way to go before he reached home, and he didn't want to waste anymore time. He just waved at the old rag and bone man, then he went back out onto the street.

As he walked out of the city, he wondered what to do to keep himself company, so he started to whistle to himself again the tune that the old Zephyrman had taught him: *All days are rhymes*, and as he whistled he listened to the wind, as it gently moved past him. The song seemed to keep him company, and as he wandered on he stared at the ever changing sky above him.

Sometimes he watched the clouds float here and there, and thought it all a great wonder: ‘How does the sky know what the earth is thinking? How has life got so much meaning way up there in the faraway clouds? How do colours travel? How do they change, then disappear? How does everything seem the same, here there and everywhere, and where does everything go to, and where does everything end up?’

After a time, he saw the sky like a mirror reflecting everything back down to earth; it was as if whatever you were thinking ascended, then descended in time and space. Not far along from where the rag and bone man worked, there was a wall that ran for a great distance along the road. His little eyes could just see over it. He noticed that there was a big grey building there behind the wall, but there was no garden, and no trees where birds could

hide, or fly in to. Everything he could see was made of concrete - it seemed a godforsaken place.

This whole area in fact seemed strange, and only now again a car came along the road. The young lad noticed that no faces inside the cars, as they passed by, looked out at this place. He also noticed a huge sign outside the big grey horrible building that read: Labour Exchange. The young lad did not know what it meant, but he felt that the people on the poster outside the building were unhappy. They all seemed to be pretending to be happy for the photograph, but something, or someone, had for some reason drained them of life. He did not like this street, nothing seemed to happen here except blank faces going towards a blank building. The factories around this area had for some reason all shut down.

He checked his compass just in case he had wandered in the wrong direction, but he was still heading in the direction of the south side. As he walked by the horrible building, he remembered what the Zephyrman had said to him when they had passed by this place on the way into town: 'The people who go in there have been excluded from society.'

This seemed awfully bad, and as one or two more people crossed the road, the young lad wondered about them, and where they were going to. He noticed a woman heading towards the big horrible building; he suddenly thought that it was his mother. The young lad ran towards her as fast as he could, but sadly it was not her. Although, she looked like his mother she seemed different from her, as if she had been blown about by strong winds. He would ask the Zephyrman why she looked like his mother, yet was different from her, when they met again. Naturally, he thought of home and how wonderful it was: his mother cooking at the kitchen window, and his father sitting at the living room window, with his shirt sleeves rolled up, reading the newspaper. He always rolled his shirt sleeves up to read the paper. These images made him sad, and as they faded he thought how lucky he was to live in the country with a good mum and dad.

Just then a town cat appeared and crossed the road and this cheered him up. The young lad wondered if the town cat knew at what time the cars went by at; for the cat seemed so confident that nothing would come down the road at that moment and flatten it. In a cocky manner, the cat stopped in the middle of the road, looked left, then right, then it slipped under the wall and went inside one of the derelict buildings, on the same side of the street as the horrible building.

This certainly was a desolate place: no fields, no farms, no trees, and the strangest thing of all - no wind. Way out in the distance the young lad could see more figures coming towards the horrible building. They all seemed hypnotised as if under some commandment: 'You must walk towards the horrible building, the horrible building, the horrible building...'

To keep himself from crying he thought about the little green island where he played football in front of his house, and thankfully he soon reached the end of this horrible area. At the end of the wall the road veered left and a busy shopping centre appeared; he noticed that all the shops ran down both sides of the street. He remembered it from the journey into town with the Zephyrman, but it seemed busier now for more buses and cars made their way up and down it. Well, at least he knew he was going in the right direction. He could see that the people came from all directions to shop here. This shopping centre wasn't as big as the city, but it still seemed huge in comparison to where the young lad came from. He looked for his mother in amongst the shoppers again, but he could not see her. It was funny though, for all the women in some way acted in the same way. They all seemed to be aware of their duties to the world, their families and friends. Even though he did not know any of them the women made him feel happy and secure in a funny kind of way.

He stopped at one shop that was selling apples and oranges, and other fruits that he could not name, and as he stared at the apples he felt that they only appeared to be so colourful because he was so hungry.

This area seemed to be very cosmopolitan indeed. The young lad watched men and women from other countries walk up and down the street dressed in all sorts of unusual costumes. The strange thing was that even though they were all different colours and creeds, they obviously didn't live too far away from here. The young lad noticed that the secrets they carried in their faces were different from the ones that he could read on the faces of the country people. The young lad gazed around himself in pure wonder, until he remembered what the Zephyrman had said: 'Only children understand life.'

As he looked up at the sky he noticed a cloud drifting over a row of shops, and when his eyes fell back down to the ground he noticed that there were tenement houses above the shops. This made him speculate, 'I wonder if the people who own the shops live there, or is that where the owners keep their things?'

Just then a young man climbed on to a bike outside the electricity shop. He seemed to be in a terrible hurry to get somewhere. Suddenly, another man, about the same age, came tearing out after him and chased him along the street, 'Stop thief!' he shouted. 'Stop!'

Although, the thief pedalled even harder to get away he fell off the bike, and presently scampered away up a side street leaving the bike lying in the middle of the pavement with its back wheel spinning round and round. As he picked up his bike, the young man laughed, then he turned to the young lad and said, 'It's a bad area this, full of thieves, full of evildoers,' and then for some reason he laughed again.

The young lad thought about the Zephyrman, for he had mentioned the word evil many times, as they had walked into town; he too had laughed after speaking about it. He was just about to ask the young man if he knew the old man, when he got on his bike and pedalled away. This left a contradiction in his young mind, and he wondered what lay in store for him on the rest of the journey home.

Another strange incident happened just outside the flower shop: an angry young man came out of the shop. When he

bumped into the worker who was bending down watering plants, he got so angry that he hit the man with the flowers across his face that he had just bought from his shop. 'I have never seen anyone hitting anyone with flowers before,' uttered the young lad to himself.

The man working in the shop, who was dressed in a light coloured overall, just looked at the angry young man, then carried on watering the plants.

When he reached the end of the street, the young lad took out his compass again, and he half hid it in both hands just in case any evildoers were lurking around. He wondered what direction he should go in. In a strange way, everything seemed different now that he was going out of town.

At the end of the shopping centre he could see a park and a field and for a moment he thought he was near home, but it was just a town park. At that moment, he wondered whether or not he should walk through it, for it looked like a shortcut in the direction he was going, or should he go round it and follow the main road. After he had looked at the pigeons that were gathered outside the main gates of the park, he decided to go round the park, the same way as the cars. He felt that it would be safer. But halfway along the road, he felt so overpowered by an overwhelming feeling of loneliness that he started to cry again. Everything that seemed friendly for some unknown reason seemed to be somewhere else in the world, somewhere faraway - out of reach. He felt alienated from everything good in the world, and he could not understand why.

Even though he knew the world to be an evil place he did not want to say anything unkind about it, for he knew that to be wrong. He seemed to be wandering through a lonely world where no one cared about anyone. When he felt lonely in the country, he could look up at the fields and they would comfort him. They were friendly hills. This was just a long road going nowhere, where no one cared about him, or for that matter anything else. He thought about his mother and father and his sister, and the warm fire that

his dad made every morning. He had once heard the word despair spoken by his father, and now he knew what it meant.

‘And what’s wrong with you then,’ said a sweet woman’s voice, as he approached the traffic lights.

The young lad looked at her red bag, then he looked up and saw a middle-aged woman’s face.

‘I’m lost,’ he said, then cried again.

‘Where is your mother?’ asked the middle-aged woman.

‘I don’t know.’

Just then, the middle-aged woman’s thick warm coat blew open, and a colourful skirt appeared; the young lad held onto it. He somehow knew that the warm colours from her skirt would chase away his tears.

She said soothingly, ‘Now just you wait hear, I’m going to phone someone and we will get you home.’

However, when she had gone for some reason the young lad’s spirits picked up, and he forgot all about her and he wandered away.

Soon, he came upon another shopping area a little bit further down the road. When he got to the bus shelter where people were waiting he joined the queue and stood with them as if waiting to board a bus back into town. He felt so grand and proud as if he were a worker off to work. Sometimes he would look up at the clock above the restaurant, and then stare at the traffic as if he were in a hurry to get somewhere.

At that moment, a beggar man came and joined the bus queue. The beggar man was dressed in an old coat,, just like the Zephyrman. However, his shirt was open, and it looked very dirty. The young lad noticed that he had not shaved and that his eyes were red. All the other people in the queue waiting for the bus ignored him. The young lad stared at him, for he was very strange indeed. And as he stared, he noticed his trousers were undone and his shoes were full of holes.

When he noticed the young lad stare at him the beggar man growled, ‘I’ve got a constitution like an Ox!’

The young lad chuckled to himself, 'Maybe he has been sleeping with the cattle out in the fields last night, and that's why he is so smelly.'

Yes, in a strange way he too seemed like the Zephyrman, but when the young lad thought about it he was not like him at all. Thinking up something to say, the young lad uttered quickly, 'An ox has a good constitution, has it not.'

Many of the people in the queue heard this remark and they laughed.

The beggar man growled again, 'I slept in a close last night, and I will probably sleep in another one tonight.'

No one but the young lad looked at the beggar man when he spoke. He noticed he moved from side to side as he growled at him; however sometimes he would turn and stare at the passing cars. Sadly, the beggar man's eyes seemed to have stopped searching for interesting things in life a long time ago. A dark green coloured bottle stuck out of his pocket, and sometimes he would touch it with his hand to see if it were still there. The bottle seemed to be important to him.

When the bus arrived as usual people got on and off, however the young lad moved away in the direction of the south side and, as he walked on, he wondered why the man was angry with the world. A strange feeling in the wind told him that he hated himself. This was a strange thing for a young lad to understand.

Suddenly, the sun came out and everything in the world seemed all right again. Shrugging his shoulders the young lad walked on and he soon came upon another group of shops. First of all he looked in at the grocers shop, then he stuck his head in at the door of the newsagent's shop. He felt happy for everything at that moment seemed friendly. Not far along the street he saw a pub and two men standing outside it, just like they did in the country. Out of the blue, a group of three boys appeared; they were slightly older than he was. One of them a fat lazy boy came up to him and asked him for some money. The fat boy smiled at him, as if it were all a great joke. Then the fat lazy boy's friend made a face and snarled at him, 'Or I shall kick your head in!'

The other boys laughed at this, then they stared at him. 'I did not bring any money with me,' said the young lad quickly.

The fat lazy boy grabbed him by the collar of his shirt, 'Are you sure!'

Luck was on his side for at that moment a car pulled up and an old woman got out; she looked over at the boys standing not far from the pub. Then she locked the door of her car. The fat lazy boy must have thought that she had come for her son. He shouted, 'Run!' Then he punched the young lad on the nose, and they all scampered off.

The elderly woman, after she locked her car door heard the young lad scream and she came over to him right away. 'Are you all right, son? Oh, the boys who hang around here are rough - you should avoid them. They will end up like their fathers: drunkards and thieves. Don't worry everything will be all right - take this.'

The young lad liked her and as he wiped the blood away from his nose with a big white handkerchief, he said, 'Thank you.'

In a familiar tone, she said, 'The devil gets into them when they are young, and they are taken early.'

The way she spoke was like the old Zephyrman; he was just about to ask her if she knew the old man, but he didn't get the chance. She said brusquely, 'Come on I will take you home. I'm going as far as the supermarket,' and as she pulled him along, she added, 'You have got to watch walking on your own, for the devil roams around like a wolf. You read about it all the time: people disappearing, people found unconscious in strange places, people murdered.'

Although, this sounded awfully bad the woman looked happy and she added in a bright tone, 'I was once a schoolteacher, you know, till an evil wind came and made all the teachers redundant.'

Not being wanted seemed a terrible thing, and the young lad felt sorry for the woman, 'She must have to go to that horrible building down the road on the way into town,' he thought to himself. He wondered if he should say something to her. After a pause he declared in a proud tone, 'When I get older I am going to be a great man. I will open up a business and give everyone a job.'

The woman laughed and looked at him, but when they got to her car the young lad thanked her for the offer. Then he said in a grown up way, 'I will be all right. I will make my own way home now.'

He smiled at her and wondered what the old Zephyrman would have made of it all. Then just at that moment,, he thought he heard the old man's voice in the wind say to him: 'Now be polite.'

So, with a huge smile on his little face, he said, 'Thank you lady; please remember to stay on this side of time.'

'That's a strange thing to say young man,' exclaimed the elderly woman.

Feeling better now the young lad nodded at her, then he walked on. When he reached the point where the road goes two ways, he took out his compass again and studied it. 'North is this way and south is that way,' he told himself.

Just before he walked down the long road he noticed a man in a quaint shop. He had little round glasses on; his hair was white at the sides and he was bald on top. He noticed the sign above the window, "Cobbler". Suddenly the old man looked up at that moment, and he smiled at the young lad. Then he made a funny face at him. This made the young lad laugh, then he went on his way.

He noticed the houses in this area were built one on top of the other, like they were throughout the city, but still the young lad wondered how people existed this way. He could not understand it at all: 'Why are there no fields on either side of the houses so as to help people when they get lonely. How can people live with no fields around them.'

As he walked on some leaves and papers stirred around his feet, but he did not worry. The young lad listened to the wind as it blew them along the street. He thought that the wind was making

up a crazy song to take to the city, so as to cheer up the people who lived there.

A kind man with a happy face came out of a shop and smiled at the young lad. He was tall and his hair was slightly grey; however in a rough tone, he said to him, 'Right son,' as if to acknowledge the presence of another.

The young lad did not answer, he just smiled back at him, then he looked down at his check suit trousers. The man with the happy red face seemed full of life. He laughed, then he put his hand into his pocket and said, 'Right there you are son,' and gave him a handful of coins.'

The young lad could hardly believe his luck, and he immediately thought of his uncle: for he too was kind and generous.

The pace of life around the man seemed slow, but he seemed very busy. He patted the young lad on the head, 'Get yourself some sweets, son,' he said in a gruff voice, then he walked towards an old bashed car parked by the kerb.'

Inside the car, the young lad noticed a young man in the passenger seat. The young man looked at him and smiled. Then the car drove off. Not far along the road a train headed over a bridge and made a terrific noise like thunder, but the people, who were out shopping on the street hardly took any notice of it. So not to be different the young lad just casually walked on too.

He could see further up the road the traffic lights on both sides of the street were the colour red, and all the cars had stopped. Opposite the traffic lights people were pushing trolleys towards a big store. The young lad could not see the country yet, but he sensed that it was near. He looked at his compass again, then to the sky above him. Dark clouds were gathering here and there, and the sun at this point was nowhere to be seen. Everything seemed still. All of a sudden a crack appeared across the sky like a silver thread running towards the ground. Then a great noise sounded as if everything up there in the sky was about to fall down onto the earth. Light rain fell, followed by a terrific bang. Then all of a sudden the rain came pouring down and bounced off the

grey streets. Not knowing what to do, he did what he always did when he was not sure what to do: he ran as fast as he could.

Drivers in their cars looked at him as he ran along the pavement. They seemed to want to tell him something. Certainly, the sky was changing all the time, and dark violent clouds were now gathering above him. There was something in the air. Everyone was in a hurry; they seemed to be heading somewhere. Suddenly, the hungry tummy of a great god rumbled again, lightning flashed and this time the sky cracked in three places. This was no shower like the last one, this was something terrible. Another white line cut across the purple sky. Then just before the tummy of the great god rumbled again, the rain came straight down from heaven. As the rain bounced off the road in front of him, the young lad thought he heard the voice of the old Zephyrman whisper to him, 'Stay on this side of time,' and he wondered where the old man sheltered when the weather got nasty. With a smile he told himself, 'He probably goes to see a friend till the storm goes off, then makes his way back to the country.'

The young lad was not far from the golf course now, so he knew that he was not far from home. When he got to the bus-stop he stood there under the shelter for a moment. Thankfully, the rain tailed off and the dark clouds drifted away over the sky towards some other part of the world. The young lad smiled to himself at the wonder of it all. Then suddenly, he noticed the arc of the rainbow over the sky again. This made him feel good, and for fun he again tried to count all the colours that made up the rainbow, 'I will walk under it and make my way home,' he muttered to himself.

The sky was really wonderful to watch, and for a moment the young lad stood there and just gazed at it. Then for some unknown reason he wandered up a pathway towards a green door not far from the bus stop. When he got there he stood under the wooden porch, where baskets of flowers were hanging on each side of the door. As the wind blew around his feet thankfully the storm abated; however, some leaves came up the path and blew

into the doorway where he stood, and fell onto the mat that had the word “Welcome” written on it.

Suddenly, a beautiful young woman, elegantly dressed, carrying shopping bags came running up the drive, her long golden hair flowing from side to side, as the wind played with it. The beautiful young woman sidestepped the young lad, and deftly pushed a key into the lock. As she did this, she looked down and smiled at him. Then after she had unlocked the door she uttered, ‘You had better come in, young lad.’

When the door was open the young lad gazed inside the house. The young lad had never seen anything like this before, everything was messy, yet ordered. In the hallway there were flowers everywhere and books were lying here and there as if completely forgotten about. Presently, he followed her through to the main room, that was situated on the left hand side. When he entered the room he noticed that it looked back out onto the main road, and he could see the bus stop and the shelter where he had stood. This room too was an organised mess. There were paintings everywhere, some of them hanging on the walls, others lying up against the chairs. The sofa was completely covered with books, papers and magazines, a guitar lay up against it. In fact, he couldn’t tell the colour of the sofa, because of all the things on top of it. But right in the middle of this room there was a huge flat board with a magnificent painting of a beautiful woman on it.

When the beautiful woman in the room with the long golden hair saw the young lad stare at her things, she laughed at him. Then she looked out of her window to see what the weather was like: ‘Don’t be frightened, young man, I am an artist.’

Presently, she put on a record, and went around the room humming the song to herself. After she had thrown off her black plastic coat, she went over to the drawing table, by the window, and picked up a red pencil and some paper that was lying on top of the desk there.

He had never been called a young man before and it made him feel good. Feeling proud, he sat down on the chair opposite

the fire and the young lady with the golden hair started to sketch him. Nonchalantly she asked him, 'What is your favourite colour?'

Hardly thinking, the young lad replied, 'Blue,'

'Then we shall make the sky behind you blue,' she whooped and laughed.

The young woman with the long golden hair picked up something and moved it from the table beside her painting board. Then she put it down and asked him, 'Would you like something to drink?'

'Something gassy,' cried the young lad.

Feeling relaxed the young lad took out his compass and stared at it. The young lady looked at the black object in his hand, and as she went by him she asked him, 'What's that?'

My friend the Zephyrman gave it to me; it is a compass.'

'That's a strange name: the Zephyrman,' said the young artist slowly.

'Yes, he travels everywhere with the wind, but I lost him in town; someone took him away.'

'I am not surprised with a name like that,' she replied.

The young lady laughed, and left the room. When she was gone he thought about his own home, his mum and dad. The house where he lived, how when it rained he sat and looked out of the window. He noticed the sun was now shining again. He thought he had better not hang around, so while the young lady was pouring him something gassy to drink in the kitchen he slipped out of her house quietly.

When he got back out onto the street he looked at the surroundings, checked his compass, then he confidently walked on. The rain had washed the streets, and the sun sparkled again everywhere; the wind gently blew, and he could smell the country farms way out in the distance. He felt that it would not be too long till he was home.

One or two people mainly women pushing prams heading for the big supermarket down the road looked at him, and feeling in a good mood he smiled back at them, as they passed by him. Coming towards him he noticed a small woman in a red cloak. In

a leisurely manner she approached him. He could see she was trailing a modern suitcase on wheels. She looked about 50 years old. Once more, the young lad detected a young spirit inside an old body. It seemed to dance through her skin. He was going to smile at her and say hello. However, the woman in the red cloak spoke to him in a broken English voice. 'Well, it's good to be back.'

And although happy she lamented about having to travel away from home. Then in a quick musical voice, she asked the young lad, 'Will you come into my lovely garden and take a picture of me.'

He could see that she lived in front of the railway station, but now, after his journey, he understood the world to be an evil place, and he was naturally cautious about going inside. After some inner dialogue with himself, he answered her, 'Yes, but I can't stay long.'

The small woman in the red cloak, after handing him a small camera walked up the path by the side of the house and bent down in front of a large fir tree. As she did so, she shouted, 'I'm so happy to be back home,' and beamed a wonderful smile for the camera.

The young lad snapped a picture, then he looked at her house in front of the station. The strange thing about this whole scene was that the house, and the woman, seemed to be individual entities in the young lad's mind. Up until this point people and places had always been one and the same thing. 'How very strange,' thought the young lad to himself.

'I used to play the organ in the local church,' said the woman as she came to collect her camera from him. He remembered what the Zephyrman had said about music: that it quickens the spirit and makes humans graceful and alive. After a long gaze at her strange white face, he laughed and said to her, 'Stay on this side of time,' then he went on his way.

Not far along the road, he noticed a haggard old woman sitting on a wall. As he got near to her she smiled at him. 'Heading home,' she said kindly, and kicked her feet, as if to reflect the rhythm of her words.

The young lad thought that even though she was old she seemed young. In fact, when he thought about it old people were just old on the outside, they were still young on the inside. This was fantastic: for when he got old, he too would be young again. 'I think my home is this way,' he said to her.

The other fascinating thing that appeared in his mind at this point was that he thought all women were in somehow related to each other, even when they were old. He could see this in them.

'Well, keep going don't stop till you get there,' said the kind old woman. The Zephyrman will show you the way,' and she laughed.

This was a great surprise, 'You know the Zephyrman!' cried the young lad.

The old woman laughed again, and said, 'Oh, yes I know the Zephyrman all right. He blows you round the world, and as he does this he whispers strange things into your ear. It's a great life, my little one, if you don't weaken.'

Naturally, the young lad was very excited: 'Is he okay.'

'Yes, he is fine.'

'Well, tell the Zephyrman to call on me again.'

'I will tell him,' said the haggard old woman, then she laughed again.

The wind at that moment blew and her headscarf gently fell over her face. She sorted it and as she did so she kicked her legs again to show that she was happy.

'You never know when he's about,' she laughed.

The young lad smiled back at the old woman. He thought that the Zephyrman, and the old woman had some sort of understanding, but he couldn't put that into words. The young lad went forward and kissed the old woman sitting on the wall outside the big house. Then he said, 'Remember and tell the Zephyrman to call on me again.'

She laughed and as she waved her hand at the young lad she told him, 'Hurry home now, your mother is waiting for you.'

The strange thing was that when he looked back, the old woman had gone, and the wind at that moment whistled by, as if it were laughing at him.'

He knew he wasn't far from home now, and as he wandered on he thought to himself, 'Does the Zephyrman know everyone in the world.'

Although, he knew he was not far from home now, secret thoughts danced in his head telling him to go back to the city and collect the treasure that was there; for he had forgotten all about it. His journey had all been for nothing.

After this he took out his compass, and looked at it. Although the compass pointed to the south the arrow inside the glass seemed static. This image made him sad. It had all been for nothing, however as his tears fell the wind gently caressed his face and wiped them away.

Children just like him were running around playing inside their gardens. The young lad shouted to them, but they did not seem to notice him. One of the girls went to school with his sister. He looked inside for her, but he could not see his sister there.

Then he saw the little green island, and the house where he lived. He could see his mother and father were standing in the garden; they were looking at each other. The trees on the little green island between the houses looked so beautiful. The birds were singing, the leaves were gently swaying. Suddenly, Mr Hornblower's car went past, and he blasted his horn.

The young lad looked up at the endless sky above him. And for a moment he watched the clouds drift here and there, and he felt once more at peace with the world. That is until his mother spotted him, for as soon as she set eyes on him she came running up the street towards him, shouting, 'Just wait till your dad gets a hold of you! Where have you been?'

Music from the novel is available on download from:

<https://walkerjohna.wordpress.com/about/>

http://www.amazon.com/All-Days-are-Rhymes/dp/B002L5NY32/ref=dm_ap_alb1?ie=UTF8&qid=1268915230&sr=301-1

DAD HAS GONE

Dad has gone,
He left here on the sabbath day,
He left here for a better place.
The Minster arrived,
And after I had had her the book,
She said a little prayer.
Dad whose body was in bed.
His eyes where closed,
He was not there.
The old days are here again,
Nothing much to fear.
Outside in the taxi,
Do you know, I heard him say,
Take the bus.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2007
Release date: 2007, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: All Days are Rhymes.
Cosmos Original Records PPL member

ALL DAYS ARE RHYMES

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Sunday Monday, Tuesday is fine,
Wednesday is Moody, Thursday is mine.
And when the weekend comes,
You will be just fine,
Cause Sunday is Monday,
All days are Rhymes.
And when you laugh,
Don't be afraid,
The moon and stars,
Are the love in your heart.
Those days are gone,
Lost in a fog.
One time here in your thoughts,
Then they are gone.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2007
Release date: 2007, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: All Days are Rhymes.
Cosmos Original Records PPL member

O LORD IT'S A STRANGE WORLD

O Lord, it's a strange world.
One night, when I was fast asleep,
The devil came into the scene.
I know not how, or by what means,
For all good things now she is weak.
I will show my love for her.
Father and mother she said did not care,
No job, no lover, only despair.
To the grave I will go, I will curse and swear.
I will kick and scream, nothing is fair.
A woman taken in adultery,

You know the rules, and what must be obeyed.
Jesus stood up, and he did say:
A sinless man can cast her away.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2007
Release date: 2007, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: All Days are Rhymes.
Cosmos Original Records PPL member

INTERESTING PEOPLE

Hold on, dream girl,
Love is real,
Front back,
Side on,
Older than the wheel.
The strange talk,
I feel high,
Don't know what's real.
No one can tell me,
How I should feel.
Interesting people, they have a new way.
Oh, how we love life, is what they say.
Deep down far out,
Passed the Willow tree,
We can make love there,
Yea, you and me.
Don't run don't hide,
Love is free,
No one can tell you, how life should be.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2007
Release date: 2007, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: All Days are Rhymes.
Cosmos Original Records PPL member

SHE IS ON FIRE

All around the world,
She will haunt you.
Rollerblading love thoughts,
In your mind.
One or two or three,
Or more, no problem.
When she sees the love light in your eyes.
She is on fire, with desire.
Of all the words she likes,
The one is horny.
Something in the rhythm,
Makes her smile.

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Release date: 2007, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)
Album: All Days are Rhymes.
Cosmos Original Records PPL member

PEACE IN EUROPE

Europe the wide world,
You are like a flower.
Here is to my homeland:
Peace, love and power.
High are the mountains,
Low are the seas.
What we must fight for,
Is what we believe.
The Peace in Europe depends.
People in fountains,
All of them shouting,
Here is the reason.
They must have freedom.
Here me you wise men, you must be strong now,

No time for valour, we must have honour.

Song written and produced by John A.Walker, 2007

Release date: 2007, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)

Album: All Days are Rhymes.

Cosmos Original Records PPL member

ROBERTA

I am resigned, you are never free
Hopeless in love, no time for me.
How does it sound, forgetting me,
Lovers in life they must be free.
Roberta you are free.
You love life.
But you don't like me.
Losing a friend how can it be.
Life is so cruel, I'm all at sea.
Give me a sign something to see.
Strange as it sounds,
What's wrong with me.

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Release date: 2007, Copyright John A.Walker (JWYOU)

Album: All Days are Rhymes.

Cosmos Original Records PPL member

NO CAMERAS

Cameras,
No cameras
I believe in silence,
And peace upon the earth.
Older and wiser now,
I know how I should live.
On the other side of the glass

Where I do live.
There are lots of people,
Who never will exist.
God bless the people who never will be fooled,
By the little image that used to be a spool.

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